

MEMORANDUM

December 15, 2020

TO: Roberta Scott, Ph.D.
Director, Social & Emotional Learning

FROM: Allison Matney, Ed.D.
Officer, Research & Accountability

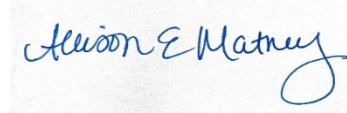
SUBJECT: **PREVENTING AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG FIFTH WARD YOUTH THROUGH THE CENTER FOR URBAN TRANSFORMATION (CUT) JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVERSION PROGRAM (JJD) IN THE HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 2020–2021**

Attached is a copy of the CUT JJD Program evaluation for the 2020–2021 academic year. The program served Fifth Ward youth who were arrested or at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system. Targeted schools were Wheatley, McReynolds, Fleming, Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy, and Secondary DAEP. Youth referred to CUT were engaged in case management and restorative justice-based services instead of going through court, probation, and possible detention. The evaluation measured the impact of the program on students' behavior, attendance, promotion, prosocial behavior, and their parents' protective factors. Arrest rates associated with targeted schools were also examined in this evaluation.

Key findings include:

- Sixty students and their families were engaged in community support services. Fifty-nine students were provided some case management (98.3%); 43 were distributed resources, such as food, rental assistance, and technology (71.7%); 40 were referred to other organizations for services (66.7%); 32 received a gift card to ease the impact of COVID (53.3%), and at least 6 at one school received tutoring (about 10%).
- Paired t-test analyses, using a pre-post design, documented an increase in the mean attendance rate for program students by 4.8 percentage points, a decrease relative to in-school suspensions by 3.1 days, and a decrease in out-of-school suspensions by nearly one day. Changes in attendance and in-school suspension rates were statistically significant.
- Difference-in-Differences analyses revealed that if non-program students in the targeted schools had participated in the program, their attendance rate would have increased by 3.6 percentage points.
- Among 34 middle-school program students, 100% were promoted to the next grade by summer 2020, while 75% of 20 high-school students were promoted by the end of the school year.
- Higher attendance rates were positively correlated with referrals to organizations for services, successful case management contacts, and families receiving resources.
- Students' survey responses indicated higher rates of prosocial behavior after the program compared to before the program, suggesting that prosocial habits can be developed within a relatively brief time span.
- Based on HISD Police Department data, the percentage of arrests associated with McReynolds, Fleming, Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy, and Secondary DAEP decreased from 2018–2019 to 2019–2020. At the same time, the percentage of arrests associated with Wheatley increased by less than one percentage point (from 1.5% to 2.1%).

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison E. Matney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'M' at the end.

AEM

Attachment

cc: Grenita Lathan, Ph.D.
Silvia Trinh

Yolanda Rodriguez
Rick Cruz

Beatrice Marquez



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

**PREVENTING AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY TO
SUPPORT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG
FIFTH WARD YOUTH THROUGH THE CENTER
FOR URBAN TRANSFORMATION (CUT) JUVENILE
JUSTICE DIVERSION (JJD) PROGRAM IN THE
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
(HISD), 2020-2021**



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EVALUATION REPORT

BUREAU OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Preventing and Reducing Delinquency to Support Academic Performance Among Fifth Ward Youth through the Center for Urban Transformation (CUT) Juvenile Justice Diversion (JJD) Program in the Houston Independent School District (HISD), 2020–2021

Prepared by Venita R. Holmes, Dr.P.H.

Abstract

The CUT Juvenile Justice Diversion Program serves youth at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. Targeted students are enrolled at five HISD secondary campuses in Fifth Ward, Texas. During the 2019–2020 academic year, the first year of the program, 60 students and their families were engaged in community support services guided by needs assessments. Fifty-nine students were provided some case management (98.3%); 43 were distributed resources, such as food, rental assistance, and technology (71.7%); 40 were referred to other organizations for services (66.7%); 32 received a gift card to ease the impact of COVID (53.3%), and at least 6 attending one school received tutoring (about 10%). Paired t-test analyses, using a pre-post design, revealed an increase in the mean attendance rate for program students by 4.8 percentage points, a decrease relative to in-school suspensions by 3.1 days, and a decrease in out-of-school suspensions by nearly one day. Changes in attendance and in-school suspension rates were statistically significant. Difference-in-Differences analyses revealed that if non-program students in the targeted schools had participated in the program, their attendance rate would have increased by 3.6 percentage points. Among 34 middle-school program students, 100% were promoted to the next grade by summer 2020, while 75% of 20 high-school students were promoted by the end of the school year. Higher attendance rates were positively correlated with referrals to organizations for services, successful case management contacts, and families receiving resources. Students perceived higher rates of prosocial behavior after compared to before the program, suggesting that prosocial habits can be developed within a relatively brief time span. Program benefits were highly emphasized by student and parent participants. Arrests associated with McReynolds MS dropped substantially, by 4.0 percentage points, over the past two years. Integrating follow-up services as a program component would allow youth more time to transfer skills acquired in the program and build positive family and peer relationships within the community.

Introduction

Juvenile justice diversion programs provide an alternative to traditional court processing, while holding youth accountable for their behavior. Diversion programs help youth avoid negative consequences linked to the juvenile justice system, including an official record and associations with delinquent peers (Farrell, Betsinger, & Hammond, 2018). Targeting youth who are at risk for offending with social, academic, mental health, and family support services may help to mitigate delinquent behavior, creating safer communities and schools, with stronger social control networks (Farrington, 1997; Herrenkohl et al., 2001).

Center for Urban Transformation (CUT)

Fifth Ward, one of Houston's most historic neighborhoods, amidst revitalization, has faced inequitable access to resources, generational poverty, and



Figure 1: Food distribution event held by CUT and partner Pleasant Hill Ministries for Fifth Ward families, 2019–2020

environmental blight – all of which are impediments to creating a community of choice where people enjoy living, working, and playing. To build on the momentum of growth and revitalization in Fifth Ward and to address unmet needs, CUT was launched under the collaboration of the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation, a 30-year-old housing and economic development nonprofit; Pleasant Hill Ministries, a 93-year-old church; Houston Habitat for Humanity; Legacy Community Health, which operates the local health clinic; and the Berg & Androphy law firm. These five founding organizations are also on the Board of Directors for CUT.

Collaboration that Launched the JJD Program

CUT's Juvenile Justice Diversion Program (JJD) is an innovative collaboration between CUT, HISD, and administrators at Fifth Ward middle and high schools. The HISD Interim Superintendent and the Mayor of Houston were pivotal in launching the program. During the 2019–2020 academic year, targeted HISD schools were Wheatley High School, Fleming and McReynolds middle schools, and the Secondary Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy could access the program as needed. However, they made no referrals in 2019–2020.

In addition, the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Harris County Department of Juvenile Probation, and local afterschool, health and other social service providers were collaborators. The program aims to break the school-to-prison pipeline and build a culture of compassion. Fifth Ward youth who are arrested or at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system are referred to CUT for case management and restorative justice-based services instead of going through court, probation, and possible detention.

In 2018, the program was designed by convening the Fifth Ward Public Safety Council, which was led by CUT and included all of the aforementioned collaborating partners as well as the University of Houston Center for Children, Law and Policy; Rice University Kinder Institute of Urban Research; Yes Prep Public Schools; Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis; Harris County Sheriff's Office; Houston Police Department; HISD Police Department; HISD Social Emotional Learning Department; Urban Enrichment Institute; Harris County Public Defender; Constable Precinct 6; Juvenile Courts 314 and 315, and My Brother's Keeper in the City of Houston Health and Human Services Department.

Funding Source

CUT and its JJD program have been supported through annual financial contributions from each of the five founding organizations on CUT's Board of Directors; funding for case and program management staff from the Harris County District Attorney's Office for the first two years of operations; and funding for an additional case manager from Harris County Department of Juvenile Probation. Additionally, grants from private foundations have supported the work, including from the Texas Bar Foundation, Houston Bar Foundation, NeighborWorks America, Houston Young Lawyer's Foundation, O'Neill Foundation, Pacific Union, Farb Family Foundation, and Herzstein Foundation. A related grant from Episcopal Health Foundation is supporting a new initiative at CUT to address disparities in health and mental health in Fifth Ward, including identifying strategies to address the types of health and mental health needs found among JJD clients.



Figure 2: CUT JJD Program model, 2019–2020

CUT JJD Program Model

The CUT JJD model encompasses a variety of community support services for at-risk students and their families in Fifth Ward by allowing them to actively engage in activities that increase their problem solving skills, expand their access to community resources, build resilience, and establish goals to change their trajectory in life (**Figure 2**). Research maintains that youth and their families who participate in community support services show improvements in education, health, behavior, social, and economic well-being (Farrington, 1997; Herrenkohl et al., 2001).

Program families were connected to services, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), based on needs assessments. Appreciative inquiry helped students identify goals and facilitated goal attainment. The CUT JJD Program case managers served as mentors to students and their parents to improve personal outcomes. For example, educational opportunities were expanded for students by helping them gain access to laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to complete school assignments. Barriers to engagement were addressed through counseling, which allowed students to focus more on their educational pursuits, improve their academic performance in school, strengthen their social-emotional skills, and successfully explore their immediate and long-term aspirations. Employment and career initiatives connected students to summer jobs, workforce opportunities for students with disabilities, career coaches, and job training. Housing assistance included legal representation, home improvement for damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, remodeling, and rent relief through government-funded and charitable organizations. Basic needs of program participants were met through the distribution of food and hygiene products. Legal pro bono services were provided, including criminal representation and assistance with fair housing issues. Counseling and health-related services emphasized the need to maintain healthy bodies and minds as families encountered challenges (**Figure 3**, p. 3). Students who were referred by schools and completed the program as juvenile offenders, may have avoided the weight of an arrest or adjudication on their record.

Finally, the Harris County COVID-19 Relief Fund offered assistance to Harris County residents most impacted by the pandemic. The Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation (CRC) received funding from the Greater Houston Community Foundation to serve the county's most vulnerable



Figure 3: CUT food distribution with Legacy Community Health Services and American Heart Association, 2019–2020

residents, particularly, residents who may not have been eligible for other COVID-related funding and/or who could not afford to wait for assistance. Program families benefited from the funding.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories provide insight into why juveniles become offenders (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Brownfield, & Sorenson, 1993; Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993; Burton et al., 1994; Flood, 2019). Specifically, social learning theory identifies an association between social development and youth delinquent behavior (Hawkins et al., 2016), maintaining that youth who refuse to adhere to accepted social norms and who have poor family relationships may be more at risk for development of maladjusted values (Fagan & Catalano, 2013). Social control theory correlates the lack of social control with the lack of youth development, poor school performance, lack of respect for authority, participation in criminal activity, and long-term offending (Baron, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2008). Thus, youth who become disconnected from society, may develop a sense of not belonging and resort to alcohol and drugs use to cope with their delinquent behavior. These theories suggest the need to implement strategies that diffuse offending behavior among youth in communities with a high propensity to observe these behaviors. Utilizing community-based models, such as the CUT JJD Program, that do not isolate youth from their communities has promise. Incorporating social support services and family engagement, along with partnerships with law enforcement and community organizations, may help alter the path of at-risk youth by helping them gain skills to lead more productive lives (Morris & Maxwell, 2001; Lipsey, 2009). To this end, this evaluation addressed the following research questions.

Research Questions:

1. What was the profile of HISD students who participated in the CUT JJD Program? How did program students compare demographically to students in targeted schools and districtwide? What proportion of students completed legal diversion?
2. To what extent did students and their families participate in services provided through the CUT JJD Program?
3. What was the impact of the CUT JJD Program on students' school attendance and behavior?
4. What were the correlational trends relative to school attendance, behavior, and community support services provided to CUT JJD Program students?
5. To what extent did participation in the CUT JJD Program affect HISD Department of Research and Accountability

students' school attendance and behavior relative to comparison-group students at targeted schools?

6. What were the promotion rates of students who participated in the CUT JJD Program at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year?
7. What perceived changes were observed in students' prosocial behavior and parents' acquisition of protective factors before and after program participation during the 2019–2020 academic year?
8. What were the arrest rates associated with targeted CUT JJD schools during the 2019–2020 academic year, and how did they compare with the previous year?

Review of the Literature

Diversion programs were conceived to minimize the effects of labeling associated with offending (Lundman, 1976). Many diversion programs have documented benefits. Specifically, the Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) noted reduction in recidivism in program models that relied on behavioral contracting and advocacy. Dembo et al. (2007) found that combining sanctions, restitution, and psychosocial interventions prevented recidivism more effectively than intensive case management, monitoring, and sanctions alone.

There may be adverse effects of juvenile diversion programs, including net widening, increased recidivism, and inequitable access and use (Polk, 1984; Mear et al., 2016). Net widening may occur if youth who otherwise would not have had contact with the juvenile justice system are referred to diversion programs. Increased recidivism and delinquent behavior may persist following diversion programs if youth consider these types of programs as not having negative consequences (Mears et al., 2016).

The National Research Council and the National Academy of Medicine reviewed the impact of school policies related to grade retention, suspension, expulsion, and juvenile delinquency. These organizations reported that such policies, which disproportionately affect minority students, have negative consequences for at-risk youth (McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001; Meek & Gilliam, 2016). The researchers found that, suspension and expulsion do not appear to reduce undesirable behavior, and both are linked to increased delinquent behavior.

Family characteristics, such as poor parenting skills, family size, home discord, child maltreatment, and antisocial parents may be risk factors toward supporting juvenile delinquency (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000; Wasserman & Seracini, 2001). Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, & Rosenbaum (2002) considered the family as the most important risk and protective factor for young women. Designing programs that work with family members and at-risk youth may enhance the benefits of juvenile diversion programs. Strengthening protective factors within families may increase resiliency in the presence of increased risk factors or other stressful situations (Development Services Group, 2015; CDC, 2020).

The research has also shown a positive association between peer acceptance and delinquent behavior (Steinberg, 1987). Expanding opportunities for youth to develop positive peer relationships may help to offset delinquency. Prosocial behavior refers to actions that people perform voluntarily to try to help other people. Baumsteiger (2019) found that building prosocial behavior increases psychological well-being, enhances social relationships, and improves physical health, including greater longevity. Herrenkohl et al. (2001) found an association between

academic performance and delinquency. Schools that provide instructional support systems and motivational incentives for school attendance may help to reduce delinquency among children who are challenged with low academic performance, low commitment to school, and low educational aspirations.

Various other strategies have been offered through research. Meta-analyses conducted by Schwalbe et al. (2012) found that using a stepped approach, where low-risk offenders are diverted to minimal services while higher risk offenders are engaged in more active psychosocial programs, may help to address key criminogenic needs. Bloom et al. (2002) documented the need for gender-appropriate interventions and interventions that are culturally-sensitive to race or ethnicity. Offering programs that provide evidence-based family-interventions, behavioral programs, case management, restorative justice, family group conferencing, and victim-offender mediation with high levels of supervision and fidelity are critical to successful diversion programs. There was little evidence that supported broker-only models, mentoring models, and youth courts for reducing rates of recidivism among diverted youth (Schwalbe et al., 2012).

Methods

Study Population

Student enrollment, demographic characteristics, attendance, disciplinary actions, and promotion data for the evaluation were obtained using a variety of sources. First, an electronic database of youth who participated in the CUT JJD Program during the 2019–2020 academic year was acquired from program administrative staff. Next, HISD student enrollment was verified using the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Data on youth who were verified as HISD students based on PEIMS formed the 2019–2020 student group used for the analyses. Comparison-group students were enrolled in the targeted schools during the 2019–2020 academic year.

Data Collection and Analyses

Attendance data were extracted from PEIMS databases. The attendance rates of students with both 2018–2019 (pretest variable) and 2019–2020 (posttest variable) data were used in the analyses. A paired t-test was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant changes from year-to-year in students' attendance rates. The level of statistical significance was $p < .05$. P-values close to 0 indicate that the observed difference is unlikely to be due to chance; whereas, a p-value close to 1 suggests no difference between the groups other than due to chance (Dahiru, 2008). Both one-tailed and two-tailed tests were used to detect statistical significance in this study.

Student behavior was measured using disciplinary action data. Disciplinary actions were extracted from the PEIMS 425Record, Disciplinary Action Data – Student report. Disciplinary action data were also retrieved through the OnData Suite system. The 2018–2019 data were used as the pretest measure and the 2019–2020 data were used as the posttest measure. Students' actual number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions days were used in the analyses. The systems were used to determine whether students had additional expulsions.

The 2019–2020 promotion rates for middle-school students were obtained from the Chancery Promotion, Retention, and Enrollment file (PSE). High school promotion rates were determined by comparing students' grade levels at the end of the 2019–2020

academic year to their grade levels at the beginning of the 2020–2021 academic year.

Qualitative analyses included web-based surveys administered to youth and their parents using the Google survey feature as they exited the program. Sixteen students and 20 parents completed the surveys. The Youth Survey measured students' prosocial behavior. The Parent Survey measured their ability to process and manage common and more difficult issues that may be unexpectedly encountered in life. The Parent Survey was adapted from the *Parents' Assessment of Protective Factors* (PAPF), which was developed by the National Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood (QIC-EC).

Paired t-tests were conducted using youth and parent survey results to detect differences in their feelings before the program and after the program. Cohen's d effect size calculations measured the strength of the relationships, using the two data points, based on a within-subjects, paired samples design. The mean, standard deviation, and correlation between the two conditions were used in the effect size calculation. Interpretation of Cohen's d effect sizes have been revised: $d (.01)$ = very small, $d (.2)$ = small, $d (.5)$ = medium, $d (.8)$ = large, $d (1.2)$ = very large, and $d (2.0)$ = huge (Sawilowsky, 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017) *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC), effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are considered to be *substantively important*. "Effect sizes at least this large are interpreted as a qualified positive (or negative) effect, even though they may not reach statistical significance in a given study" (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 17).

Purposive sampling, conducted by CUT staff, was used to select interview participants. Students and their parents were, then, invited to participate in one-on-one interviews by the evaluator. The interview questions were adapted from the *Youth Satisfaction Questionnaire* (Stuntzner-Gibson, Koren, & DeChillo, 1995). A total of eight families (parent and child) were interviewed. Of the eight families, five children and eight parents participated in the interviews. Questions were translated to Spanish by HISD Communications Department staff. A Spanish-speaking interpreter was used to accommodate participants whose primary language was Spanish. The interviews were conducted over the telephone at the participants' convenience.

Qualitative and quantitative data related to the types of services provided to students and students' legal diversion status were acquired from CUT JJD Program staff. In addition, interviews were conducted with CUT staff to affirm the extent that the program was delivered as proposed. Finally, data on arrests associated with targeted campuses were acquired from the HISD Police Department.

Study Limitations

There were several limitations to the study. First, there was potential bias related to comparison-group selection. The comparison group may have participated in similar types of support services and may have been exposed to behavioral interventions that contributed to favorable outcomes. Second, data related to the extent that the targeted population participated in program activities or completed legal diversion were acquired from program staff. However, the data were considered reliable and valid based on the program's tracking system. Survey participants were asked to recall information. However, the timing of the study may have helped to mitigate this limitation. Data on arrests, acquired from the HISD Police Department, did not indicate whether individuals

Table 1: Profile of CUT JJD Program students' schools compared to students in targeted schools and secondary students districtwide, 2019–2020

Total Participation	CUT JJD Program (N = 60)	Targeted Schools (N = 2,365)	Districtwide (Grades 6–12) (N = 65,534)
	%	%	%
Gender			
Male	80.0	63.2	50.3
Female	20.0	36.8	49.7
Ethnicity			
Asian	-	.2	4.0
African American	56.7	45.7	22.4
Hispanic	40.0	52.9	62.2
White	1.7	0.8	9.8
Native American	1.7	0.1	0.9
Two or More Races	-	0.3	1.3
Pacific Islander	-	-	0.1
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	13.3	27.7	33.3
Economically Disadvantaged	100.0	89.5	76.1
At-Risk¹	96.7	77.5	65.0

¹ At-risk students met PEIMS criteria, including unsatisfactorily performance on an assessment, did not advance from one grade level to the next for one or more school years (TEA, PEIMS Data Standards, 2010).

were actually students at the targeted schools. Student identification numbers were not included for validation. However, the arrest data were used by the HISD Police Department in reports.

What was the profile of HISD students who participated in the CUT JJD Program? How did program students compare demographically to students in targeted schools and districtwide? What proportion of students completed legal diversion?

Table 1 presents the total number of HISD students who participated in the CUT JJD Program during the 2019–2020 academic year. The demographic characteristics of program students were compared to students enrolled in targeted schools and grades 6–12 students districtwide. Program students were predominately male (80.0%), African American (56.7%), economically disadvantaged (100%), and at risk of dropping out of school (96.7%) (Table 1).

Figure 4 reveals that males, African Americans, at risk, and special education students were far more likely to be CUT JJD Program participants compared to students in the targeted schools. Specifically, males were 2.33 times more likely to participate in the program, while African Americans were 1.55, at-risk students were

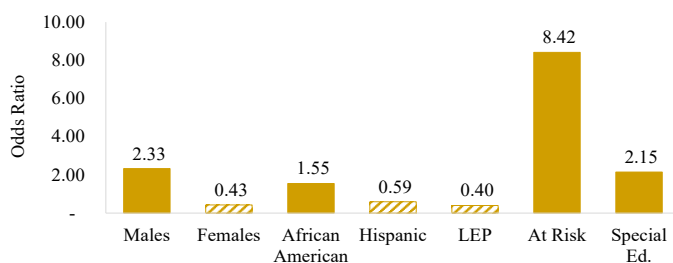


Figure 4: Odds of CUT JJD participation by subgroup, 2019–2020

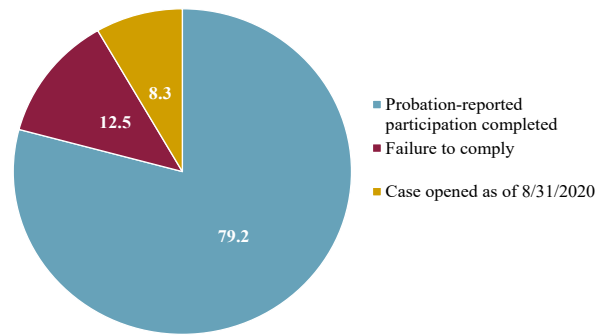


Figure 5: Legal diversion completion rates, 2019–2020 (n = 24)

8.42 times, and special education students were 2.15 times more likely to be CUT JJD Program participants than students in the targeted schools. Additional information on student demographic characteristics can be found in **Table 2 (Appendix A, p. 14)**.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office and Harris County Juvenile Probation Department liaised with CUT to grow the program and allow more students to be diverted away from involvement with the criminal justice system. **Figure 5** depicts the status of 24 students in the program who were referred through the probation department. It is evident that 79.2% of the students completed legal diversion and 12.5% failed to comply. Two cases (8.3%) remained opened at the beginning of the following school year, on 8/31/2020.

To what extent did students and their families participate in services provided through the CUT JJD Program?

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the CUT JJD Program provided a variety of services to students and their families to improve academic, social, health, and behavioral outcomes. The delivery of services was guided by needs assessments conducted with individual families at program entry. Specifically, program staff collaborated with HISD principals, school administrators, counselors, wraparound specialists, teachers, school nurses, and law enforcement to discuss individual students, their home lives, best ways to contact them and their parents, and referral incidents. Some discussions, arranged by CUT between students, their parents, and school administrators, focused on alleged incidents and contributing factors. CUT also collaborated to initiate a tutoring program at one school using CUT-sourced volunteers, books, and sports equipment donated by the Astros Foundation via CUT connection, and workshops titled *Connecting with Compassion* on restorative justice skills.

An analyses of the types of services provided through the program are presented. **Figure 6** shows that by the end of the academic year, 59 of the 60 students and their families received

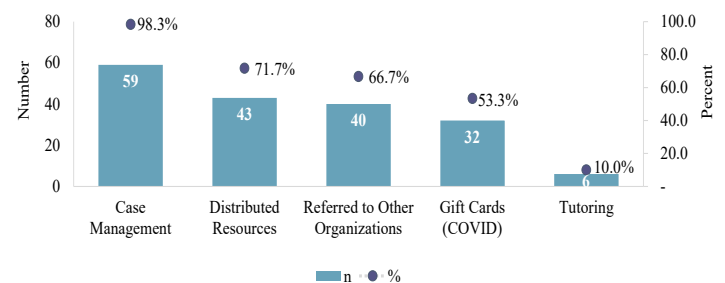
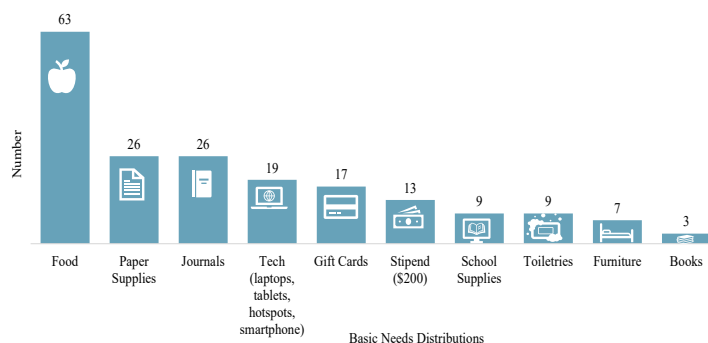


Figure 6: Services received through the CUT JJD Program, 2019–2020

Table 3: Referral organizations, 2019–2020

Case Management
Center for Urban Transformation
Basic Needs
Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation (housing)
Houston Food Bank (food)
Houston Furniture Bank
Houston Community Land Trust (housing)
Salvation Army – Young Adult Resource Center
Target Hunger (food)
Education
Houston Public Library
Urban Enrichment Institute (UEI) (Fifth Ward Enrichment Program) (afterschool)
Employment and Career Development
Camp Cardiac
Houston Fire Department
Houston Medical Forum (career coaching)
SERJobs
Workforce Solutions
Legal
Berg & Androphy
Harris County Dispute Resolution Center
Pleasant Hill Ministries
Counseling
Depelchin's Children's Center
Families Empowered
Families Under Urban & Social Attack (FUUSA)
Getsemane Missionary Baptist Church
Impact Houston Church of Christ
Mayor's Anti-Gang Taskforce
Vecino Health Center
Health
Legacy Community Health
Mentorships
Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBSTX)

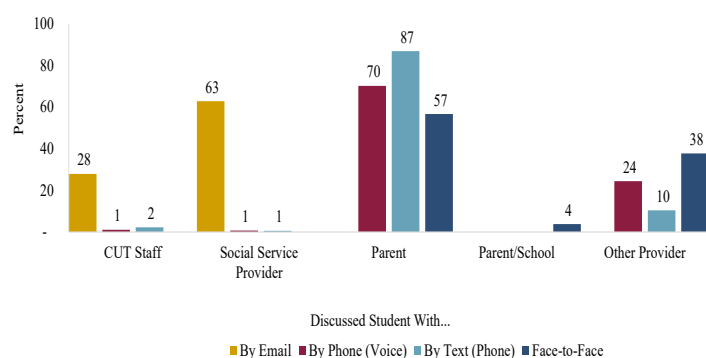
**Figure 7:** Basic needs distributions provided to CUT JJD participants, 2019–2020 (Some families received multiple distributions.)

multiple distributions; therefore, counts exceed the total number of student participants. Food distributions occurred most frequently ($n = 63$), followed by paper supplies and journals ($n = 26$). Comparatively, furniture and books were distributed the least ($n = 7$ and $n = 3$, respectively). The minimum number of basic needs distributions provided to families was 2, the maximum number was 7, and the average distribution per family was 3.2.

Case management: Traditional case management requires planning, coordinating, advocating, and monitoring client services across a variety of settings and client groups (Caragana, Penelope, & Austin, 1983). Effective case management has been found to reduce problem behaviors, encourage social reintegration, and enhance public safety (Enos & Southern, 1996). The exploration of successful case management contacts and attempts to deliver case management services provide a perspective on the efforts required to provide needed services to CUT JJD Program students and families.

Tables 4a and 4b (Appendix C, pp. 16–17) provides the number and percentage of successful and unsuccessful case management contacts made by CUT JJD Program caseworkers during the 2019–2020 academic year using different communication mediums. Unsuccessful contacts were attempts to provide case management services. Individuals who were included in the communications are also presented. A summary of the successful contacts are depicted in **Figures 8a and 8b** (p. 7).

There were 3,465 case management contacts during the academic year, 1,198 contacts were successful (34.6%). The most prevalent successful contacts were with parents using text messages by phone (87%) (Figure 8a). In addition, 70% of the successful case management contacts were with parents using voice on the phone. Figures 8b show that less than 10% of the

**Figure 8a:** Percentage of successful CM contacts according to contact medium, 2019–2020 (CM success rate: 34.6%)

some case management (98.3%); 43 were distributed resources, such as food, housing assistance, and technology (71.7%); 40 were referred to other organizations for assistance (66.7%); 32 received a gift card to ease the impact of COVID (53.3%), and 6 students received tutoring at HISD schools (10%). More details follow regarding the specific types of services offered and the level of engagement between program staff and the targeted population throughout the academic year.

Referrals to local organizations for services: **Table 3** shows a list of organizations that students and their families were referred to for services. The list includes 26 organizations. The types of services addressed the CUT JJD Program focus areas. Referrals were based on the needs of program participants. It is evident in **Table 3** that the highest number of organizations that students and their families were referred to provided counseling services ($n = 7$). Comparatively, mentorships were sought through one organization, which was Big Brothers Big Sisters. Additional referral organizations are shown in **Appendix B** (p. 15).

Basic Needs Distributions: **Figure 7** depicts the percentage of CUT JJD students and their families who were distributed resources to meet their basic needs. Many families received

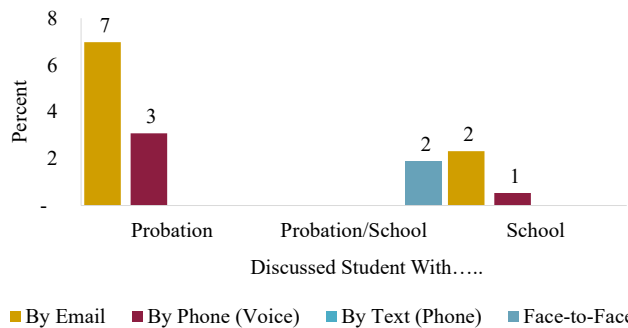


Figure 8b: Percentage of successful CM contacts according to contact medium, 2019–2020 (CM success rate: **34.6%**)

successful contacts were made with parents at the school, probation, and school staff. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted contact outcomes. Specifically, program staff observed that prior to the pandemic, more contacts occurred with students/school. However, during the pandemic, case management shifted to include more parent contacts.

Tutoring: At least six students at McReynolds Middle School received tutoring services. Tutoring was provided at HISD schools.

COVID Needs Check In: In spring 2020, CUT JJD Program staff surveyed program participants to determine their needs related to technology access (telephone, computers, internet); employment; rental assistance; health; basic needs; and any other challenges they were experiencing during the pandemic. Needs data were gathered from 36 families; however, 43 contacts were made, 5 families received multiple contacts. At the time of the survey, 32 contacts had internet to do school work (74.4%), 34 contacts reported a need for toiletries or hygiene products (79.1%); and 23 contacts needed help with food (53.5%). Health challenges discussed with case managers seemed to be related to parents' existing diseases or worry about employment. However, several families indicated that the child or parent were already seeking help from a therapist.

What was the impact of the CUT JJD Program on students' school attendance and behavior?

A paired t-test was used to assess the impact of the CUT JJD Program on students' attendance. Students included in the analyses had both 2018–2019 (pre) and 2019–2020 (post) attendance data. **Appendix D (Table 5, p. 18)** shows that 58 students had attendance data for both years. Attendance rates were calculated based on the number of days enrolled in school and the number of days attended. **Figure 9** shows an increase in the mean attendance rate for CUT JJD students over the two-year period by 4.8 percentage points. The finding was statistically significant ($t = 1.637$, $df = 57$, $p = .05$, one-tailed test).

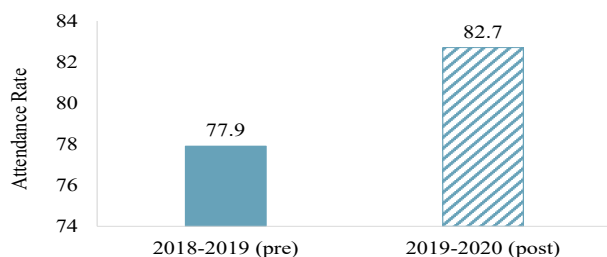


Figure 9: Mean attendance rate, 2018–2019 (pre) vs. 2019–2020 (post)

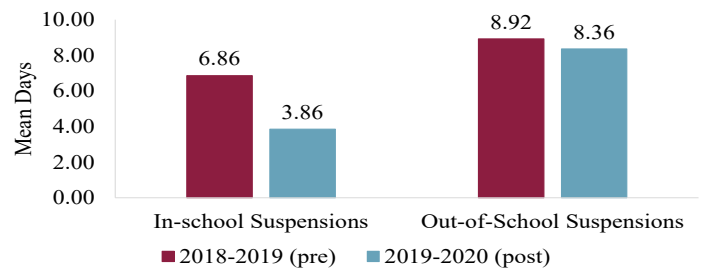


Figure 10: Mean suspension days, 2018–2019 (pre) vs. 2019–2020 (post)

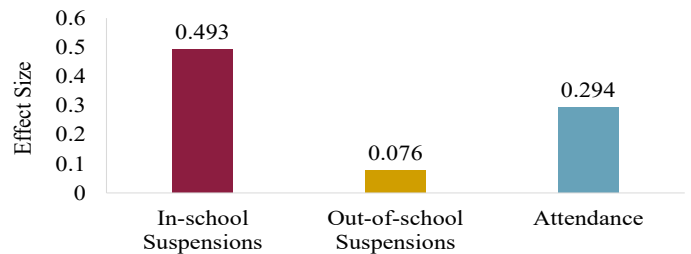


Figure 11: Cohen's d effect sizes, attendance and suspension outcomes

A paired t-test was also conducted to determine the impact of the CUT JJD Program on the behavior of students who participated in the program during the 2019–2020 academic year. Students included in the analyses had both 2018–2019 (pre) and 2019–2020 (post) disciplinary action data. **Appendix D (Table 6, p. 18)** shows that 14 students had in-school suspensions and 39 students had out-of-school suspensions. **Figure 10** reveals a decrease in the mean number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions days for CUT JJD Program students over the two-year period. The mean decrease for in-school suspensions was by 3.1 days. This result was statistically significant ($t = -1.857$, $df = 13$, $p = .044$, one-tailed test). The mean decrease for out-of-school suspensions was by .56 days ($t = .477$, $df = 39$, $p = .319$).

Cohen's d effect sizes were calculated using pre- and post data to determine the extent that the CUT JJD Program impacted students' behavior at school and school attendance. The analyses revealed that participation in the program had a medium effect on in-school suspensions (0.493) and a very small effect on out-of-school suspensions (0.076) (**Figure 11**). Moreover, the program had a small effect on school attendance (0.294). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017) *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC), effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are considered to be *substantively important*. Effect sizes at least this large are interpreted as a qualified positive (or negative) effect, even though they may not reach statistical significance in a given study.

What were the correlational trends relative to school attendance, behavior, and community support services provided to CUT JJD Program students?

Pearson's correlational analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between variables explored in this study. The findings are presented in **Table 7a** (p. 8) and in **Appendix E (Table 7b, p. 19)**. Table 7a provides a summary of the results. It is evident that there was a strong positive relationship between referrals to organization and case management, $r(40) = .684$, $p < .01$; referrals to organizations and distributions, $r(40) = .319$, $p < .05$; and distributions and case management, $r(59) = .582$, $p < .01$. These relationships were statistically significant. Other important

Table 7a: Correlation analysis exploring trends among study variables, 2019–2020

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Referral to Organizations	-	.684**	.319*	.288	.061	.332
2. Case management	-	-	.582**	.083	.272	.382
3. Distributions	-	-	-	.101	.151	.389
4. Attendance, 2019-2020				-	-.096	.147
5. Out-of-school Suspensions, 2019-2020					-	.199
6. In-school Suspensions, 2019-2020						-

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).; *Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

associations observed in the study were the higher the attendance rate, the more referrals to organizations, the more successful case management contacts, the more distributions received, and the less days students spent in out-of-school suspensions.

To what extent did participation in the CUT JJD Program affect students' school attendance and behavior relative to comparison-group students at targeted schools?

The attendance rate of CUT JJD Program students was compared to students who did not participate in the program at the targeted schools. A total of 58 treatment students and 1,732 comparison-group students were included in the analyses. Treatment students had a mean attendance rate of 77.8 in 2018–2019 and 82.7 in 2019–2020 (**Figure 12**). Comparison-group students had an attendance rate of 89.0 in 2018–2019 and 90.3 in 2019–2020. The mean gain for program students was 4.90 days and the mean gain for comparison-group students was 1.30 days. Difference-in-Differences analyses measured the impact of the treatment, with data from the treatment and comparison groups. **Figure 13** reveals that if non-CUT JJD students had participated in the diversion program, their attendance rate would have increased by 3.6 percentage points.

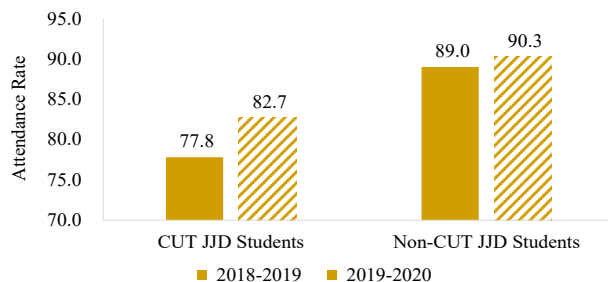


Figure 12: CUT JJD treatment-group vs. non-CUT JJD comparison-group students relative to attendance, 2018–2019 (pre) vs. 2019–2020 (post)

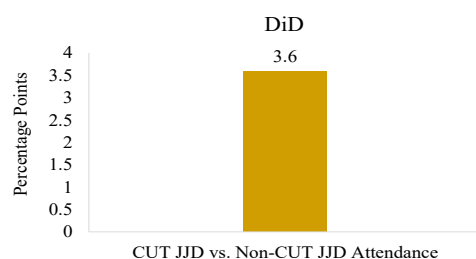


Figure 13: Attendance Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analyses, pre and post attendance outcomes, treatment vs. comparison-group students

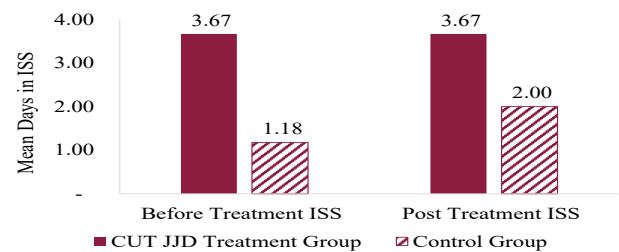


Figure 14: Propensity score matching using 2019–2020 in-school suspension (ISS) as outcome variable, controlling for 2019–2020 covariates

Propensity score matching measured the program's treatment effects on 2019–2020 in-school suspensions using non-randomized data, controlling for the number of days that students received in-school suspensions during the 2018–2019 academic year. Other covariates used in the model were economic status, gender, and special education classification. Baseline characteristics (before matching) of CUT JJD and non-CUT JJD student groups are presented in **Appendix F (Table 8a, p. 20)**. The results of the analyses are also shown in **Appendix F (Table 8b, p. 20)**. The extreme values of CUT JJD Program students made it difficult to form matches to conduct similar analyses using out-of-school suspensions as an outcome variable.

Figure 14 provides a summary of the propensity score matching analyses used to detect the impact of the treatment on in-school suspensions. Before matching, the mean number of days that treatment-group students received in-school suspensions was much higher compared to control-group students ($M = 3.67$, $S.D. = 6.3437$ vs. $M = 1.18$, $S.D. = 4.5899$). However, there was a reduction in the gaps between the treatment and the control groups relative to in-school suspensions after matching ($M = 3.67$, $S.D. = 6.3437$ vs. $M = 2.00$, $S.D. = 5.7497$). The differences between the groups decreased, from 2.49 days to 1.67 days. The reduction in the number of in-school suspensions was statistically significant for the CUT JJD treatment group ($p < .035$), but not for the control group ($p < .07$).

What were the promotion rates of students who participated in the CUT JJD Program at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year?

Promotion rates for CUT JJD Program students were calculated based on middle or high-school enrollment. Data for 34 middle-school and 20 high-school students were retrieved from promotion data files. The findings are depicted in **Figure 15**. At the end of the 2019–2020 academic year, 15% of middle-school

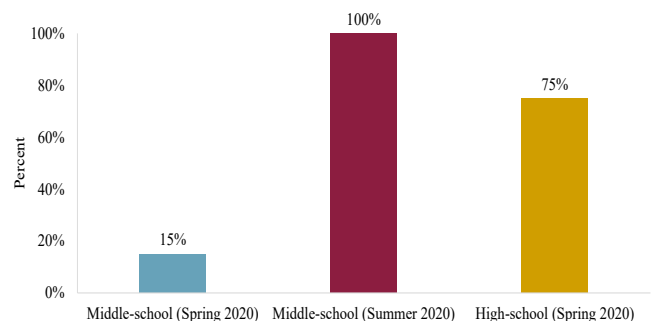


Figure 15: Promotion rates of CUT JJD middle school students ($n = 34$) and high-school students ($n = 20$), 2019–2020

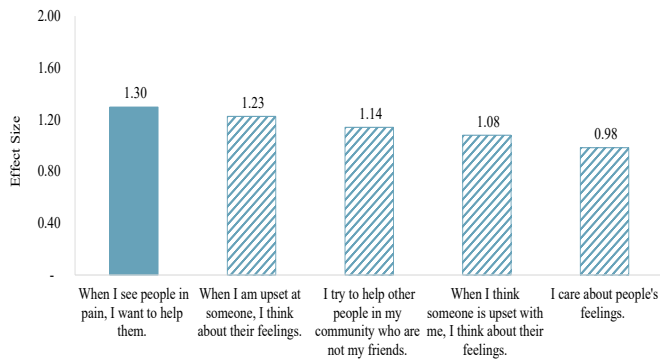


Figure 16a: Very large to large program effects, Youth Prosocial Survey, 2019–2020

students were promoted to the next grade. However, after summer school participation, 100% of the middle-school students were promoted to the next grade. The promotion rate for high-school students was 75% at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year.

What perceived changes were observed in students' prosocial behavior and parents' acquisition of protective factors before and after program participation during the 2019–2020 academic year?

Prosocial behaviors have been associated with “greater psychological well-being, better social relationships, and better physical health” (Baumsteiger, 2019, p. 215). Protective factors may lower risks of negative outcomes or reduce impact of risks that individuals encounter in life (Development Services Group, 2015; CDC, 2020). A total of 16 students completed a survey to assess prosocial behaviors. In addition, 20 parents completed a survey to explore their acquisition of protective factors. The survey completion rate for the student population was 26.7% and 33.3% for the parent population. The survey required both groups to recall how they felt before the program and after the program as they exited the program.

Students' Prosocial Behaviors

Students' survey results, including descriptive statistics, paired-t test, and Cohen's d effect size analyses can be found in **Appendix G (Tables 9a and 9b, pp. 21–22)**. A summary of the findings revealed that students reported higher ratings on all items that measured prosocial behaviors over time. The highest rating attained before and after program participation was on the item, “I think about how people feel who are in pain” ($M = 2.13$ vs. $M = 2.87$). The finding was statistically significant ($t = 3.00$, $df = 15$, $p = .009$). Students reported the lowest rating on the item, “When I am upset with someone, I think about their feelings”; however, after the program, the mean rating on this item increased significantly ($M = .81$ vs. $M = 1.69$, $t = 4.869$, $df = 15$, $p = .000$).

Cohen's d effect sizes were calculated based on students' mean ratings on survey items before and after the program using a paired samples model. The results are presented in **Figure 16a** (very large to large program effects) and **Figure 16b** (large, medium to small program effects). Sawilowsky (2009) interpretations of Cohen's d were used ($d (.01)$ = very small, $d (.2)$ = small, $d (.5)$ = medium, $d (.8)$ = large, $d (1.2)$ = very large, and $d (2.0)$ = huge).

Figure 16a reveals that very large program effects were observed on the item, “When I see people are in pain, I want to help

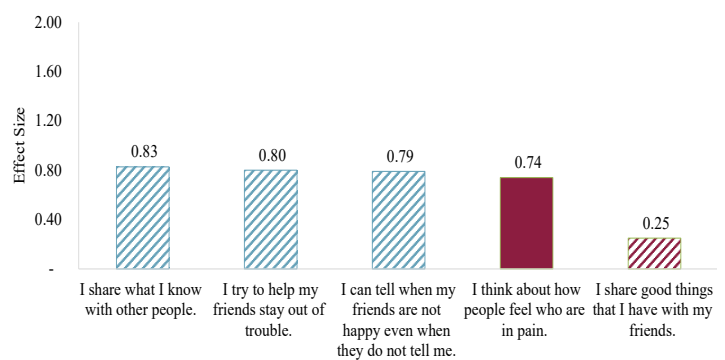


Figure 16b: Large, medium to small program effects, Youth Prosocial Survey, 2019–2020

them” ($d = 1.30$) and “When I am upset at someone, I think about their feelings” ($d = 1.23$). Large program effects were observed on the item, “I try to help others in the community who are not my friends” ($d = 1.14$), “When I think someone is upset with me, I think about their feelings” ($d = 1.08$), and “I care about people's feelings” ($d = 0.98$). In contrast, small effects were reported on the item, “I share good things that I have with my friends” ($d = 0.25$) (Figure 16b).

Parents' Protective Factors

Parents' survey result, encompassing descriptive statistics, paired-t test, and Cohen's d effect size analyses are shown in **Appendix H (Tables 10a and 10b, pp. 23–24)**. Parents reported higher ratings on 11 of the 13 items that measured protective factors over time (84.6%). The highest ratings, before and after the program, were observed on the item, “I can take care of my child even when I have personal problems” ($M = 2.13$ vs. $M = 3.00$) and “I can take care of my child even when I am sad” (2.90 vs. 3.00). Before the program, the lowest rating was reported on the item, “I am willing to ask for help from community programs or agencies”; however, after the program, the mean rating on this item increased significantly ($M = 2.30$ vs. $M = 2.55$, $t = 2.517$, $df = 19$, $p = .021$).

Cohen's d effect sizes were calculated based on parents' mean ratings on survey items before and after the program using a paired samples model. The results are presented in **Figure 17a** (medium program effects) and **Figure 17b** (p. 10; small to very small program effects). Medium program effects were observed on the majority of survey items, including, “I have someone to ask for help when I need it” ($d = 0.67$) and “I have someone to help me calm down if I get frustrated with my child” ($d = 0.60$). In contrast, very small effects were observed on the items, “I am

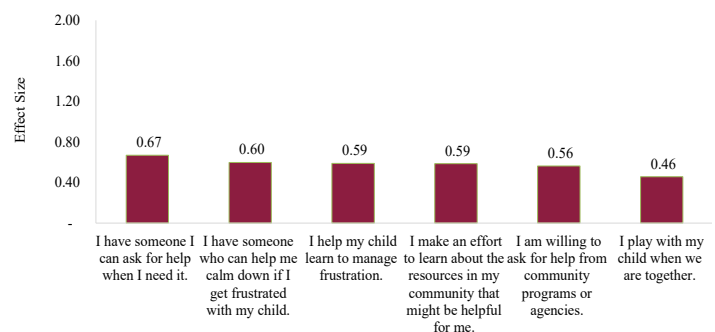


Figure 17a: Medium program effects, Parents Protective Factors Survey, 2019–2020

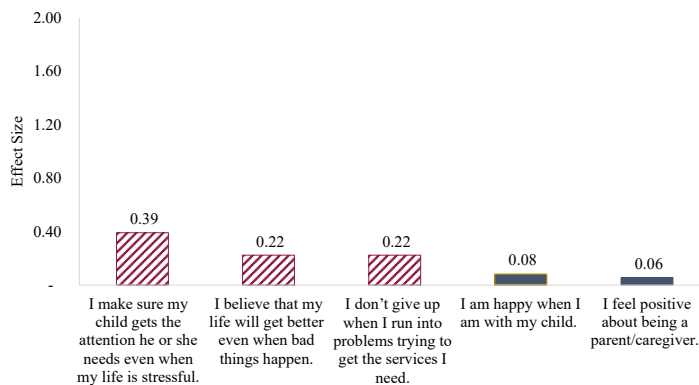


Figure 17b: Small to very small program effects, Parents Protective Factors Survey, 2019–2020

happy when I am with my child” ($d = 0.08$ and “I feel positive about being a parent/caregiver” ($d = 0.06$). Parents’ perceptions decreased on both items over time. However, the differences were not statistically significant (See Appendix H, pp. 23–24).

Open-ended Student Survey Responses on Goals

Students were asked open-ended questions on the survey regarding the program. The survey questions and a sample of their responses are presented below.

What helped you achieve their program goals:

- “...help from the program.”
- “I had some people who showed me that they care and stood by my side during the things I needed to accomplish.”
- “...my grandma and family.”
- “I knew what I had too do, so I decided to do something about my situation.”
- “...critical thinking.”
- “...listening to people’s advice, trying to make my mom proud, and not following the wrong crowd.”
- “My caseworker, she’s the best.”
- “...Being in the program helped a lot.”
- “I get rewarded.”
- “...So thank you for everything y’all done for us.”

How students think the program can help other youth:

A visual representation of students’ responses relative to how the program can help other youth is reflected in **Figure 18**. In general, students felt that program staff cared about youth and can have a positive impact on their lives. The program can provide guidance to youth and help them make appropriate decisions about what is right and wrong. Student participants also felt that the program can provide a space for youth to talk, communicate their feelings, and seek understanding, which may help to improve their outlook on life.

One-on-One Interviews with Students and Parents

One-on-one interviews were conducted using a purposive sample of students and their parents recommended by CUT JJD Program case managers (**Appendix I**, p. 25). Parents were asked to reflect on why their child participated in the program, the services that their child received, how the services made a difference in their child’s life, how the services helped their child



Figure 18: Visual depiction of CUT JJD Program students’ perceptions of how the program can help other youth, 2019–2020

reach their personal goals, and who they trusted to talk to at their child’s school if the child had a problem. Students were asked similar questions to measure alignment between their responses and the responses of their parents.

Parents’ One-on-One Interviews

Eight parents agreed to participate in the interviews. The interviews were conducted over the telephone. When asked why they participated in the program, parents responded that their child encountered conflicts with other students at school or that their child was misbehaving at school due to negative influences of other students.

When asked about the services received, one parent noted that, although she did not know what was being discussed, her child enjoyed talking with the CUT JJD Program case manager. “She would take the time to listen and understand him...She was a good influence...She gave him advice. He looked forward to her call.” Several parents mentioned that their child received counseling, one-on-one visits, help with problems at school, food, and financial support to pay bills and rent. One parent stated, “They would call and talk to her. They were more like a mentor. She would also talk to me. Whatever the family needed, she arranged resources.” A parent noted that the case managers motivated their son and gave him referrals to anger management therapy.

Parents were asked how did the program make a difference in their child’s life. In general, parents noted that the program had a positive influence in their child’s life. One parent stated, “She was getting in trouble with the teachers, hanging with her friends. Her attitude got way better and I don’t have to get on her at all. She is more helpful.” Another parent stated, “It pushed him to do better, with his grades.” While another parent responded, “He is more aware of right from wrong. He thinks before he acts... Before he didn’t care...now he is more caring.” Another parent replied, “Her communication skills are way better than before. She likes to help more now since she entered the program.” Yet another parent responded, “They helped him a lot by motivating him to do good and to stay in school.”

When asked how did the program help their child meet personal goals, a parent responded, “Her grades are a lot better than last semester.” Another parent stated, “He completed junior high. Went to high school this year.” Yet another parent replied,

“She sees that she can do more. Once she focuses on that, she can do her work.”

Parents were asked who they trust to talk to if their child has a problem at school. Most parents responded, *“no one.”* With additional prompting, some parents noted that they can talk to the *“school counselor”* and *“CUT case managers.”*

Finally, when asked if there was anything they wanted to add, one parent stated, *“I never felt that no one could help or talk to my child. I guess it is okay to accept help.”*

Students' One-on-One Interviews

Five students agreed to participate in a one-on-one interview. When asked why they participated in the program, one student noted that they were *“acting up in class.”* Another student stated they participated in the program because of their *“probation officer.”* Another student responded because they *“threatened another student.”*

When asked about the services that they received in the program, one student revealed that the program *“helped with anger issues.”* Another student mentioned that they received *“gift cards, help to get a job for the summer, and help with career and job choices.”* Yet another student stated, *“they helped me communicate.”*

When asked how the program made a difference in your life, a student acknowledged, *“I can communicate with people better.”* Another student replied that they are *“not as bad a lot anymore.”* Yet another student responded, *“It made me see a better way. Now I am doing good.”* A student stated, *“My attitude changed all around. I use my coping skills.”*

When asked how did the services help them meet their personal goals, a student responded, *“She helped me... I want to graduate.”* Another student replied, *“Graduate and be responsible. My grades got better.”*

Finally, students were asked who they trust to talk to if they have a problem at school. In general, students revealed that they have *“no one”* at school that they trust to talk to if they have a problem, particularly because school is virtual. However, one student noted that there is a *“counselor”* who can help with course selection.

What were the arrest rates associated with targeted CUT JJD schools during the 2019–2020 academic year, and how did they compare with the previous year?

The HISD Police Department provided arrest data for this evaluation disaggregated by school. HISD student identification numbers were not provided; therefore, the associated school for individuals in the data could not be validated. It should be noted that three individuals associated with Wheatley HS and one individual associated with McReynolds MS in the dataset were older than 18 years old. These individuals were excluded from the analyses.

Table 11 shows the number of arrests and student enrollment at each school for the 2018–2019 and the 2019–2020 academic years. Student enrollment was extracted from PEIMS. Percent of arrests was calculated based on these data. **Figure 19** shows that the percentage of arrests associated with McReynolds MS, Fleming MS, Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy, and Secondary DAEP decreased from 2018–2019 to 2019–2020. Arrest associated with McReynolds dropped substantially, by 4.0

Table 11: Number and percentage of arrests associated with targeted schools based on school enrollment, 2018–2019 vs. 2019–2020

	2018–2019			2019–2020		
	N Arrest	N Enrolled	% Arrest	N Arrest	N Enrolled	% Arrest
Wheatley*	13	873	1.5	16	781	2.1
McReynolds*	38	595	6.4	13	554	2.4
Fleming MS	7	486	1.4	4	438	0.9
Leland	3	501	0.6	0	479	-
Secondary DAEP	24	124	19.4	18	113	15.9

*Three individuals at Wheatley and one individual at McReynolds were at least 18 years old and were excluded from the analyses. Note: Student enrollment was extracted from PEIMS.

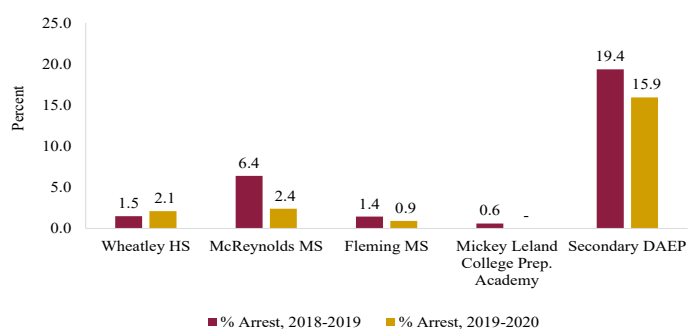


Figure 19: Arrest rates associated with targeted schools based on school enrollment, 2018–2019 vs. 2019–2020

percentage points. Similar findings were observed at Secondary DAEP, where arrests declined by 3.5 percentage points. At the same time, the percentage of arrests associated with Wheatley HS increased by less than one percentage point (from 1.5% to 2.1%).

Discussion

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the CUT Juvenile Justice Diversion Program served Fifth Ward youth who were arrested or at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system. Youth referred to CUT were engaged in case management and restorative justice-based services instead of going through court, probation, and possible detention. Referred youth may have become disconnected from society, developed a sense of not belonging, and resorted to delinquent behavior. Evaluating programs that are designed to diffuse offending behavior in this population seems warranted. The findings may provide insight regarding how communities can support positive change in the trajectories of at-risk youth.

The CUT JJD Program targeted students enrolled at Wheatley High School, Fleming and McReynolds middle schools, and the Secondary Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Students enrolled at Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy had access to the program; however, no students were served in the current school year. Students were predominately African American, and far more likely to be identified as special education and at risk of dropping out of school compared to students in the targeted schools and secondary students districtwide.

Sixty students and their families received a variety of community support services throughout the 2019–2020 school year. Services provided were guided by needs assessment data gathered

from program participants at entry. Fifty-nine students received some case management (98.3%); 43 were distributed resources, such as food, housing assistance, and technology (71.7%); 40 were referred to other organizations for assistance (66.7%); 32 received a gift card to ease the impact of COVID (53.3%), and at least 6 received tutoring at McReynolds Middle School (10%).

Based on the research, it was theorized that there is an association between program participation and students' school attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Moreover, there was an assumption that students' perceptions of their prosocial behavior and parents' protective factors may contribute to successful outcomes under examination. Key findings from the study provided evidence to support previous research. Specifically, paired t-test analyses revealed an increase in the mean attendance rate for CUT JJD Program students over a two-year period by 4.8 percentage points, a decrease in the in-school suspension days by 3.1, and a decrease in out-of-school suspensions by nearly one day. Changes in attendance and in-school suspensions rates were statistically significant. Difference-in-Differences analyses revealed that if non-program students in the targeted schools had participated in the program, their attendance rate would have increased by 3.6 percentage points.

Among 34 middle-school program students identified in the data, 100% were promoted to the next grade by summer 2020. Moreover, 75% of 20 high-school students were promoted by summer 2020. The study found that higher attendance rates were positively correlated with referrals to organizations, successful case management contacts, and distribution of resources to students and their families. As expected, students with higher attendance rates tended to spend less days in out-of-school suspensions.

Surveys and one-on-one interviews were conducted with students and their parents using purposive sampling techniques. In general, both groups were overwhelmingly positive about how the program has impacted their lives. There was evidence of increased prosocial behavior among student participants based on survey responses of how they felt before and after the program. Students were able to acknowledge their own feelings and the feelings of others who may be experiencing challenges. Students were also able to recognize the events that led to program participation and identify preventative strategies to avoid similar behavior in the future. Students interviewed boasted of academic and social accomplishments. Parents noted improvements in protective factors. The trust relationship established with CUT JJD Program case managers coupled with insufficient positive peer and school relationships suggest the need to expand the program over longer periods of time to strengthen engagement.

The evaluation explored the arrest rates associated with targeted schools based on data acquired from the HISD Police Department. The percentage of arrests associated with McReynolds MS, Fleming MS, Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy, and Secondary DAEP decreased from 2018–2019 to 2019–2020. Over the same time period, the percentage of arrests associated with Wheatley HS increased by less than one percentage point.

In summary, the program evaluation found evidence that incorporating a community-based model, such as the CUT JJD Program within Fifth Ward, may deter future delinquent behavior of participating youth, improve relationships within families and among peers; and, ultimately increase students' academic performance in school. Policy implications include providing interventions for children who exhibit problem behaviors at

early ages, which may offset the likelihood of these behaviors manifesting during adolescence and persisting over time. The need to integrate follow-up services as a program component may provide additional program benefits to allow youth more time to transfer skills gained in the program to support a stronger community.

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Appendix A

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of CUT JJD Program students compared to students at targeted CUT JJD Program schools and all secondary students districtwide, 2019–2020

	CUT JJD Program		Targeted Schools		Districtwide (Grades 6–12)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Enrollment	60	100.0	2,365	100.0	65,534	100.0
Gender						
Male	48	80.0	1,495	63.2	32,944	50.3
Female	12	20.0	870	36.8	32,590	49.7
Ethnicity						
Asian	0	-	5	.2	2,615	4.0
African American	34	56.7	1,081	45.7	14,711	22.4
Hispanic	24	40.0	1,251	52.9	40,791	62.2
White	1	1.7	19	.8	6,401	9.8
Native American	1	1.7	3	.1	139	.9
Two or More Races	0	-	6	.3	828	1.3
Pacific Islander	0	-	0	-	49	.1
Grade Level						
06	6	10.0	413	17.5	9,347	14.3
07	15	25.0	441	18.6	9,748	14.9
08	17	28.3	455	19.2	9,534	14.5
09	10	16.7	366	15.5	11,176	17.1
10	7	11.7	223	9.4	9,305	14.2
11	5	8.3	240	10.1	8,538	13.0
12	0	-	227	9.6	7,886	12.0
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	8	13.3	656	27.7	21,835	33.3
Economically Disadvantaged	60	100.0	2,116	89.5	49,870	76.1
At-Risk	58	96.7	1,833	77.5	42,626	65.0
Special Ed.	16	26.7	342	14.5	5,747	8.8
Gifted/Talented	0	-	240	10.1	13,511	20.6
Note: Enrollment data based on PEIMS.						

Appendix B

Additional referral organizations, 2019–2020	
Basic Needs	
Wesley Community Center (food pantry & park distributions)	
Saint Vincent de Paul Blessed Sacrament (food pantry)	
Anderson Memorial COGIC (food pantry)	
BakerRipley – Ripley House (food pantry)	
Our Mother of Mercy SVdP (food pantry)	
Kashmere Gardens COG (food pantry)	
Trinity Garden First Baptist (food pantry)	
Mission Center-Houston Gano (food pantry & clothing)	
Catholic Charities (food pantry, rent utilities)	
Emergency Aid Coalition Clothing Center	
Harvey Home Connect	
Revision (food deliveries during COVID)	
Christian Community Service Center, Inc. (rent & utilities)	
Harris County Community Development – Office of Social Services (rent & utilities)	
Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church (rent & utilities)	
Education	
Mickey Leland (wanting to transfer to magnet)	
Cesar Chavez High School (wanting to transfer)	
Baker Ripley – Aldine (parent wanting English as a Second Language (ESL))	
Baker Ripley – Lionel Castillo (parent wanting ESL)	
CAN Academy North (wanting to transfer)	
Families Empowered (wanting to transfer)	
F.I.E.L. (parent wanting ESL)	
Furr HS (wanting to transfer)	
On Time Grad Academy	
Sterling Aviation (wanting to transfer to HISD magnet)	
Yes Prep Fifth Ward (wanted to transfer)	
Employment and Career Development	
Latino Pilots Association	
Burger King (student wanted to work there)	
Porras Prontito (student wanted a job; local restaurant)	
St. Mary's University (summer camp on being a doctor)	
Stephen F. Austin State University (summer camp on being a doctor)	
Target (student wanted a job)	
Legal	
Disability Rights Texas	
Houston Municipal Courts	
Lone Star Legal Aid	

Appendix C

Table 4a: Case management contacts for CUT JJD Program students by contact medium, 2019–2020

			Unknown	CUT Staff	DA's Office	Other Service Provider	Parent	Parent/ Other Service Provider	Parent/ School	Probation	Total (See Table 4b)
By Email	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	21	16		52	3			23	
		%	100.0%	57.1%		65.8%	100.0%			88.5%	
	Successful CM Contacts	n	0	12		27	0			3	
		%	0.0%	42.9%		34.2%	0.0%			11.5%	
	Total Email CM Contacts	n	21	28		79	3			26	
		%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%			100.0%	
By Phone (Voice)	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	102	3	4	29	359	1		6	
		%	35.9%	27.3%	80.0%	85.3%	40.7%	100.0%		20.7%	
	Successful CM Contacts	n	182	8	1	5	523	0		23	
		%	64.1%	72.7%	20.0%	14.7%	59.3%	0.0%		79.3%	
	Total Phone CM Contacts (Voice)	n	284	11	5	34	882	1		29	
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	
By Text (Phone)	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	187	0	1	5	788	1		1	
		%	83.5%	0.0%	100.0%	71.4%	71.8%	100.0%		100.0%	
	Successful CM Contacts	n	37	8	0	2	309	0		0	
		%	16.5%	100.0%	0.0%	28.6%	28.2%	0.0%		0.0%	
	Total by Text CM Contacts (Phone)	n	224	8	1	7	1097	1		1	
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	
Face-to-Face	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	125			23	84	17	5	2	
		%	86.2%			100.0%	73.7%	100.0%	71.4%	100.0%	
	Successful CM Contacts	n	20			0	30	0	2	0	
		%	13.8%			0.0%	26.3%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	
	Total Face-to-Face CM Contacts	n	145			23	114	17	7	2	
		%	100.0%			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Unknown	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	106	3		1	1			1	
		%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%			100.0%	
Total	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	541	22	5	110	1235	19	5	33	
		%	69.4%	44.0%	83.3%	76.4%	58.9%	100.0%	71.4%	55.9%	
	Successful CM Contacts	n	239	28	1	34	862	0	2	26	
		%	30.6%	56.0%	16.7%	23.6%	41.1%	0.0%	28.6%	44.1%	
	Overall Total CM Contacts	N	780	50	6	144	2097	19	7	59	

Note: Unsuccessful CM Contacts were **attempts** to provide CM services.

Appendix C (cont'd)

Table 4b: Case management contacts for CUT JJD Program students by contact medium (cont'd), 2019–2020

			Probation/ CUT Staff	Probation/ Other Service Provider	Probation/ Parent	Probation/ School	School	School/ Other Service Provider	Staff	Total
By Email	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	1	1			38			155
		%	100.0%	100.0%			97.4%			78.3%
	Successful CM Contacts	n	0	0			1			43
		%	0.0%	0.0%			2.6%			21.7%
	Total Email CM Contacts	n	1	1			39			198
		%	100.0%	100.0%			100.0%			100.0%
By Phone (Voice)	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n		1	1		5	1	1	513
		%		100.0%	100.0%		55.6%	100.0%	100.0%	40.7%
	Successful CM Contacts	n		0	0		4	0	0	746
		%		0.0%	0.0%		44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	59.3%
	Total Phone CM Contacts (Voice)	n		1	1		9	1	1	1259
		%		100.0%	100.0%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
By Text (Phone)	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n					5	1		989
		%					100.0%	100.0%		73.5%
	Successful CM Contacts	n					0	0		356
		%					0.0%	0.0%		26.5%
	Total by Text CM Contacts (Phone)	n					5	1		1345
		%					100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
Face-to-Face	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n				0	236	2		494
		%				0.0%	100.0%	100.0%		90.3%
	Successful CM Contacts	n				1	0	0		53
		%				100.0%	0.0%	0.0%		9.7%
	Total Face-to-Face CM Contacts	n				1	236	2		547
		%				100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
Unknown	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n					3		1	116
		%					100.0%		100.0%	100.0%
Total	Unsuccessful CM Contacts	n	1	2	1	0	287	4	2	2267
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	98.3%	100.0%	100.0%	65.4%
	Successful CM Contacts	n	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	1198
		%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	34.6%
	Overall Total CM Contacts	N	1	2	1	1	292	4	2	3465

Note: Unsuccessful CM Contacts were **attempts** to provide CM services.

Appendix D

Table 5: CUT JJD Program treatment-group students, paired t-test analyses, attendance, 2018–2019 (pre) and 2019–2020 (post)

	2018–2019			2019–2020					
	n	Mean Attendance Rate	Std. Devia.	n	Mean Attendance Rate	Std. Devia.	Mean Diff.	r	Cohen's d
Attendance Rate	58	77.948	18.117	58	82.744	11.736	4.796	.469	.294

Note: One student was trimmed, data was an outlier.

Table 6: CUT JJD treatment-group students, paired t-test analyses, disciplinary actions, 2018–2019 (pre) and 2019–2020 (post)

	2018–2019			2019–2020					
	n	Mean Actual Days in Suspension	Std. Devia.	n	Mean Actual Days in Suspension	Std. Devia.	Mean Diff.	r	Cohen's d
In-school Suspensions	14	6.96	6.960	14	3.86	2.958	3.10	.488	.493
Out-of-school Suspensions	39	8.92	5.769	39	8.36	5.163	.564	.087	0.076

Appendix E

Table 7b: Correlation analyses exploring relational trends among key study variables, 2019–2020

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Referrals to Organizations	Pearson Correlation	1	.684**	.319*	.288	.061	.332
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.045	.084	.754	.227
	N	40	40	40	37	29	15
2. Case management	Pearson Correlation	.684**	1	.582**	.083	.272	.382
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.548	.074	.066
	N	40	59	59	55	44	24
3. Distribution of Resources	Pearson Correlation	.319*	.582**	1	.101	.151	.389
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.000		.459	.321	.060
	N	40	59	60	56	45	24
4. Attendance Rate, 2019–2020	Pearson Correlation	.288	.083	.101	1	-.096	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.548	.459		.542	.494
	N	37	55	56	56	43	24
5. Out-of-school Suspensions, 2019–2020	Pearson Correlation	.061	.272	.151	-.096	1	.199
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.754	.074	.321	.542		.388
	N	29	44	45	43	45	21
6. In-school Suspensions, 2019–2020	Pearson Correlation	.332	.382	.389	.147	.199	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.227	.066	.060	.494	.388	
	N	15	24	24	24	21	24
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Appendix F

Table 8a: In-school suspensions, propensity score matching - background covariates

	Before Matching					After Matching				
	N	Eco. Disadv.	Sp. Ed.	Male	Female	N	Eco. Disadv.	Sp. Ed.	Male	Female
		%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%
CUT JJD Treatment Group	34	97.1	23.5	73.5	26.5	34	97.1	23.5	73.5	26.5
Non-CUT JJD Comparison Group	355	97.2	13.2	61.4	38.6	25	92.0	16.0	72.0	28.0

Only students with in-school suspension data during the 2018–2019 and the 2019–2020 academic years are included in the analyses.

Table 8b: Propensity score matching results - paired-t-test analyses including covariates (2018–2019 in-school suspension days, gender, economic status, special education) and outcome measure (2019–2020 in-school suspension days)

Student Groups	Pre In-school Suspension			Post In-school Suspension						
	n	Mean Scale Score	Std. Devia.	n	Mean Score	Std. Devia.	Mean Diff.	t	df	p-value (one-tailed)
Before Matching										
CUT JJD Treatment Group	12	7.833	7.0689	12	4.167	3.0699	3.667	2.00	11	.035*
Non-CUT JJD Comparison Group	153	4.778	4.5899	153	3.601	2.9162	1.1765	3.170	152	.001**
After Matching										
CUT JJD Treatment Group	12	7.833	7.0689	12	4.167	3.0699	3.667	2.00	11	.035*
Non-CUT JJD Comparison Group	18	5.278	6.1243	18	3.278	2.8244	2.000	1.476	17	.079

Only students with in-school suspension data during the 2018–2019 and the 2019–2020 academic years are included in the analyses.

Appendix G

Table 9a: CUT JJD Youth Survey, 2019–2020

	Before the Program					After the Program				
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. I try to help other people in my community who are not my friends.	16	0	3	1.13	1.025	16	0	3	2.19	.750
2. I try to help my friends stay out of trouble.	16	0	3	1.94	1.237	16	2	3	2.81	.403
3. I share what I know with other people.	16	0	3	1.38	1.025	16	0	3	2.31	.873
4. I think about how people feel who are in pain.	16	0	3	2.13	1.088	16	2	3	2.87	.342
5. I share good things that I have with my friends.	16	1	3	2.06	.680	16	0	3	2.31	.873
6. I can tell when my friends are not happy even when they do not tell me.	16	0	3	2.06	.854	16	1	3	2.56	.727
7. When I am upset at someone, I think about their feelings.	16	0	2	.81	.834	16	0	3	1.69	1.014
8. When I see people in pain, I want to help them.	16	0	3	1.81	.911	16	0	3	2.56	.814
9. When I think someone is upset with me, I think about their feelings.	16	0	3	1.38	1.025	16	0	3	2.19	.981
10. I care about people's feelings.	16	0	3	1.63	.885	16	1	3	2.50	.632

r = Pearson's correlation

Survey responses recode: Most of the time = 3; Some of the time = 2; Not often = 1; and Never = 0

11. Please think about the goals that you wrote when you started the program. Did you achieve these goals? (Check one answer.)
12. What helped you achieve your goals? (Write your answer below.)
13. Do you recommend the program to other youth? (Check one answer.)
14. Please tell us how you think the program can help other youth. (Write your answer below.)

Appendix G (cont'd)

Table 9b: CUT JJD Youth Survey, paired t-test and effect size analyses 2019–2020

				95% CI						
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	p	r	Cohen's d
1. I try to help other people in my community who are not my friends.	1.063	.929	.232	.568	1.557	4.576	15	.000	.488	1.141
2. I try to help my friends stay out of trouble.	.875	1.088	.272	.295	1.455	3.217	15	.006	.510*	.800
3. I share what I know with other people.	.938	1.124	.281	.339	1.536	3.337	15	.004	.307	.827
4. I think about how people feel who are in pain.	.750	1.000	.250	.217	1.283	3.000	15	.009	.404	.740
5. I share good things that I have with my friends.	.250	1.000	.250	-.283	.783	1.000	15	.333	.189	.250
6. I can tell when my friends are not happy even when they do not tell me.	.500	.632	.158	.163	.837	3.162	15	.006	.691**	.791
7. When I am upset at someone, I think about their feelings.	.875	.719	.180	.492	1.258	4.869	15	.000	.714**	1.225
8. When I see people in pain, I want to help them.	.750	.577	.144	.442	1.058	5.196	15	.000	.781**	1.297
9. When I think someone is upset with me, I think about their feelings.	.813	.750	.188	.413	1.212	4.333	15	.001	.721**	1.080
10. I care about people's feelings.	.875	.885	.221	.403	1.347	3.955	15	.001	.357	.983

Cohen's d effect size interpretation: d (.01) = very small, d (.2) = small, d (.5) = medium, d (.8) = large, d (1.2) = very large, and d (2.0) = huge (Sawilowsky, 2009)

Appendix H

Table 10a: CUT JJD Parent Survey, 2019–2020

	Before the Program					After the Program				
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. I feel positive about being a parent/caregiver.	20	1	3	2.55	.605	20	1	3	2.50	.761
2. I take good care of my child even when I am sad.	20	2	3	2.90	.308	20	3	3	3.00	.000
3. I take good care of my child even when I have personal problems.	20	2	3	2.95	.224	20	3	3	3.00	.000
4. I believe that my life will get better even when bad things happen.	20	1	3	2.60	.598	20	2	3	2.75	.444
5. I have someone who can help me calm down if I get frustrated with my child.	20	1	3	2.20	.523	20	2	3	2.55	.510
6. I have someone I can ask for help when I need it.	20	1	3	2.35	.671	20	2	3	2.75	.444
7. I don't give up when I run into problems trying to get the services I need.	20	2	3	2.50	.513	20	0	3	2.65	.745
8. I make an effort to learn about the resources in my community that might be helpful for me.	20	1	3	2.60	.598	20	2	3	2.85	.366
9. I am willing to ask for help from community programs or agencies.	20	1	3	2.30	.733	20	1	3	2.55	.605
10. I help my child learn to manage frustration.	20	1	3	2.45	.605	20	2	3	2.85	.366
11. I play with my child when we are together.	20	1	3	2.40	.598	20	2	3	2.70	.470
12. I make sure my child gets the attention he or she needs even when my life is stressful.	20	1	3	2.70	.571	20	2	3	2.95	.224
13. I am happy when I am with my child.	20	2	3	2.85	.366	20	1	3	2.80	.523

Survey responses recode: Most of the time = 3; Some of the time = 2; Rarely = 1; and Never = 0

Appendix H (cont'd)

Table 10b: CUT JJD Parent Survey, paired t-test and effect size analyses, 2019–2020

				95% CI						
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	p	r	Cohen's d
1. I feel positive about being a parent/ caregiver.	-.050	.887	.198	-.465	.365	-.252	19	.804	.172	0.056
2. I take good care of my child even when I am sad.	.100	.308	.069	-.044	.244	1.453	19	.163	-	-
3. I take good care of my child even when I have personal problems.	.050	.224	.050	-.055	.155	1.000	19	.330	-	-
4. I believe that my life will get better even when bad things happen.	.150	.671	.150	-.164	.464	1.000	19	.330	.198	.224
5. I have someone who can help me calm down if I get frustrated with my child.	.350	.587	.131	.075	.625	2.666	19	.015	.355	.597
6. I have someone I can ask for help when I need it.	.400	.598	.134	.120	.680	2.990	19	.008	.486*	.669
7. I don't give up when I run into problems trying to get the services I need.	.150	.671	.150	-.164	.464	1.000	19	.330	.482*	.224
8. I make an effort to learn about the resources in my community that might be helpful for me.	.250	.444	.099	.042	.458	2.517	19	.021	.672**	.586
9. I am willing to ask for help from community programs or agencies.	.250	.444	.099	.042	.458	2.517	19	.021	.796**	.563
10. I help my child learn to manage frustration.	.400	.681	.152	.081	.719	2.629	19	.017	.083	.588
11. I play with my child when we are together.	.300	.657	.147	-.007	.607	2.042	19	.055	.262	.457
12. I make sure my child gets the attention he or she needs even when my life is stressful.	.250	.639	.143	-.049	.549	1.751	19	.096	-.124	.391
13. I am happy when I am with my child.	-.050	.605	.135	-.333	.233	-.370	19	.716	.110	.083

r = Pearson's correlation

Cohen's d effect size interpretation: d (.01) = very small, d (.2) = small, d (.5) = medium, d (.8) = large, d (1.2) = very large, and d (2.0) = huge (Sawilowsky, 2009)

Appendix I

Parent and Student One-on-One Interview Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is _____ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences participating in the CUT Juvenile Justice Diversion Program. As one of the components of the program evaluation, we are assessing program effectiveness in order to capture lessons that can be used in future interventions.

The interview should take about 15 minutes. I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. There are no wrong answers to your questions

Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Parent One-on-One Interview Questions

1. Why did your child participate in CUT?
2. Tell me about the services that your child received in CUT?
3. How did these services make a difference in your child's life? (Prompts: academics, relationships, teachers, peers, community)
4. How did these services help your child reach their personal goals? (Prompts: academics, college, career training/certification, employment, military, family, community, relationships)
5. Who do you trust to talk to if your child has a problem at school?

Youth One-on-One Interview Questions

1. Why did you participate in CUT?
2. Tell me about the services that you received in CUT?
3. How did these services make a difference in your life? (Prompts: academics, relationships, teachers, peers, community)
4. How did these services help you reach your personal goals? (Prompts: academics, college, career training/certification, employment, military, family, community, relationships)
5. Who do you trust to talk to if you have a problem at school?