Evalumetrics Research

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Change in Risk

Among Middle and High School Students

Following Implementation of

Community Schools Initiatives

in

Wayne County

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The Wayne County Partnership for Strengthening Families was established to "collaborate to strengthen individuals and families through agency cooperation and resource alignment". Finger Lakes Community Schools evolved with a mission to *support the development of culturally responsive, trauma-informed community schools that have the capacity to deliver a continuum of evidence-based and restorative practices organized using multi-tiered systems of supports.* Strategic planning, driven by timely information and data, provide the basis for developing and evaluating strategies to address this mission. Community Schools utilizes the Collaboration-ARCH model as the basis for logic models to quantify issues, examine underlying or root causes, and develop and evaluate interventions. ARCH stands for **A**ttachment, **R**egulation of self, **C**ompetency, and **H**ealth.

The Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS) has been conducted in schools throughout Wayne County in every odd-numbered year since 2013. The EYS is based on the Risk and Protective Factor Model developed at the University of Washington by J. David Hawkins, Richard Catalano, and Janet Miller. The EYS asks students about several critical health risk behaviors such as substance use, violence, and depression. The EYS includes questions about students' attitudes toward and **A**ttachment to school, family, and community. EYS measures of **R**egulation of Self include factor scales for impulsiveness, sensation seeking, and numerous questions related to behavior. **C**ompetency is represented by a self-efficacy scale and individual items about perceived abilities. Overall, EYS has 30 scales that represent risk or protective factors. For example, measures of risk factors include measures of lack of opportunities for prosocial involvement in school or community, low neighborhood attachment, lack of attachment to family, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

In addition to monitoring levels of specific ARCH factors, the EYS allows monitoring the overall risk level of the student population. Analysis of prevalence of high risk (5 or more factors at or above the statistical risk level) it is clear that, since 2013, Wayne County has outperformed a similar rural county in the Finger Lakes region that does not utilize a Community Schools model and in which few interventions were implemented. While many factors, including the COVID pandemic, contribute to risk factors, the results of the current analysis are consistent with the expected impact of comprehensive intervention components of the Community Schools approach.

Table 1 shows comparative change in high risk for students in Wayne County and in the comparable rural county. In 2013, prior to implementation of Community Schools, one in three (31.2%) Wayne County middle school students were at high risk, i.e., scored above the risk level on five or more scales. One in five (18.1%) comparison county middle school students were at high risk. In 2023, after initiation of Community Schools and despite the stresses of the 2020 COVID pandemic, the proportion of Wayne County middle school students at risk was 21.9%, a 29.8% decrease. During the same time prevalence of high risk in the comparison county

increased to 22.2%, a 22.7% increase. The pattern for high school students was similar with Wayne County students showing a 30.8% decrease in high risk compared to an 8.9% increase in the comparison county.

% Students with 5+ Risk Factors	Middle School			High School		
	2013	2023	Change	2013	2023	Change
Wayne County	31.2%	21.9%	-29.8%	54.8%	37.9%	-30.8%
Comparison County	18.1%	22.2%	22.7%	39.5%	43.0%	8.9%

Table 1. Comparative change in the proportion of students at high risk (5+ risk factors) in middle school (6th and 8th graders) and high school (10th and 12th grades) in Wayne County and a comparison county between 2013-2023.

Table 2 shows that decreases in high risk were greater for students of color. Among Wayne County middle school students in 2013, students of color were nearly twice as likely to be at high risk (46.7% vs, 27.2%). Similarly in the comparison county there was racial disparity in high risk (31.7% vs, 16.9%). Following implementation of Community Schools, prevalence of high risk among students of color decreased 44.8% compared to a 23.9% decrease for white students. The pattern was similar for the comparison county with students of color showing a 21.8% decrease in prevalence compared to a 28.4% increase for white students.

Among high school students the pattern is similar except that in 2023 in both Wayne County and the comparison county students of color were less likely to be at risk that their white classmates.

% Students with 5+ Risk Factors	Middle School			High School		
	2013	2023	Change	2013	2023	Change
White Students						
Wayne County	27.2%	20.7%	-23.9%	41.7%	37.6%	-9.8%
Comparison County	16.9%	21.7%	28.4%	37.6%	43.3%	15.2%
Students of Color						
Wayne County	46.7%	25.8%	-44.8%	60.7%	30.7%	-49.4%
Comparison County	31.7%	24.8%	-21.8%	64.5%	40.6%	-37.1%

Table 2. Comparative change in the proportion of white students and students of color at high risk (5+ risk factors) in middle school (6th and 8th graders) and high school (10th and 12th grades) in Wayne County and a comparison county between 2013-2023.

Analysis of prevalence of high risk (5 or more factors at or above the statistical risk level) it is clear that, since 2013, Wayne County has outperformed a similar rural county in the Finger Lakes region that does not utilize a Community Schools model and in which few interventions were implemented.