

## Fact Sheet

### **SS/HS Is a Catalyst for Partnership and Sustainability**

*Of the communities that reported SS/HS has served as a catalyst, a vast majority (95 percent) reported that it is somewhat or very likely that the primary partners in their SS/HS initiative will continue to share resources and conduct joint activities over the next 12 months. (SS/HS Sustainability Study, Prevention Research Center, Penn State University with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)*

One of the primary objectives of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative is to foster collaborative partnerships among education, law enforcement, and mental health agencies that last beyond the funding period. After the funding period ends, grantees must find their own funds and resources to sustain their prevention and healthy child development programs. Many SS/HS initiatives are succeeding with this task—the SS/HS Initiative is proving to be a catalyst for partnership and sustainable improvements within communities.

For 43.5 percent of the communities that were funded in 1999 and 2000, the SS/HS Initiative has served as the catalyst for bringing members of the school district, mental health agencies, and local law enforcement together to work on prevention and healthy child development.

Of these communities, 87.1 percent report that their partnership still exists in some form.

Of these communities, following funding from the SS/HS Initiative, a large majority (59 percent) of local SS/HS initiatives reported an increase in resource sharing.

Of the communities that reported SS/HS has served as a catalyst, a vast majority (95 percent) reported that it is somewhat or very likely that the primary partners in their SS/HS initiative (school district, mental health agency, and law enforcement) will continue to share resources and conduct joint activities over the next 12 months.

Finally, of the communities that received 3-year funding in 1999 and 2000, 97 percent reported that they are trying to continue or expand the programs and services implemented as part of their SS/HS initiative.

The faces of SS/HS are many, but the vision is one—safe schools, healthy students.

#### **Faces of SS/HS: Weslaco, TX**

Weslaco is a warm and inviting city of more than 27,000 people located 5 miles from the Mexican border. Traditionally relying on an agrarian economy bolstered by cotton, produce, and sugar cane crops, Weslaco is increasingly focused on attracting business and industry. However, this south Texas paradise is not without its challenges, including being classified by the Federal government as a high-intensity drug trafficking area. Teen pregnancy and transitory migrant families are also primary concerns for the city. The Weslaco Independent School District includes 12 elementary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 1 alternative campus that serve more than 15,000 students, 85 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged and 40 percent of whom come from migrant families. Since its inception in 2001, the grant has implemented and branded its Pinnacle Program, a comprehensive cadre of services that work collaboratively to reduce school violence, alcohol and drug use, and teen pregnancy while increasing school safety, academic achievement, and student leadership.

