# Mobilization Plan
From the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth
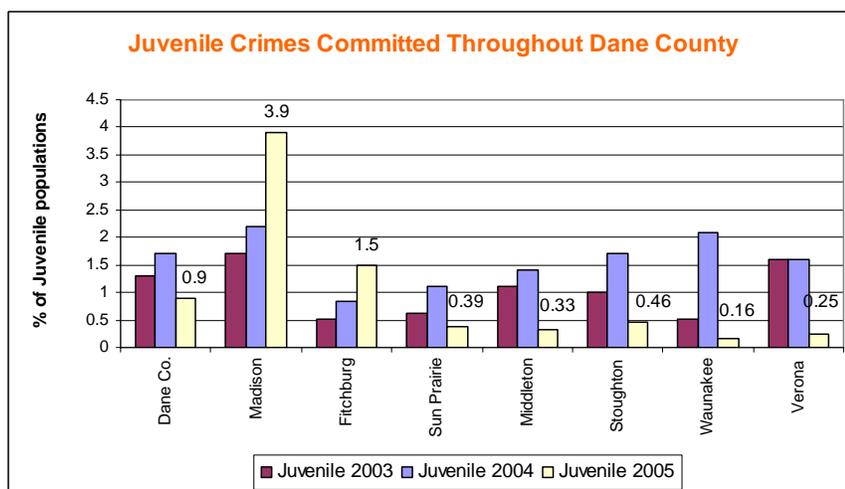
I. Problem Statement

The population of Dane County is rapidly changing as evidenced by the transformations in our youth. Of growing concern: the increasing number of students and young adults who have become disconnected

African American students least likely to graduate.

Dane County Graduation Rates

500 students do not graduate every year.*

All Students 90%, African American 64%, American Indian 73%, Hispanic 74%, Asian 89%, White 93%, Multi-racial 95%

Source: WI Department of Public Instruction. 2005.

*These students have dropped out sometime between 9th & 12th grade.

and violent. We have defined disconnected youth as youth who are not in school and not employed. The Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth (DDVY) has estimated that of the 72,000 school-aged children and youth living throughout Dane County, there are 3,000 youth aged 12 to 18 and 1,000-2,000 young adults aged 19 to 24 who are not a part of the strong educational, cultural, and economic infrastructure in our community. Sadly, each year approximately 500 students entering high school will not graduate alongside their same-aged peers.
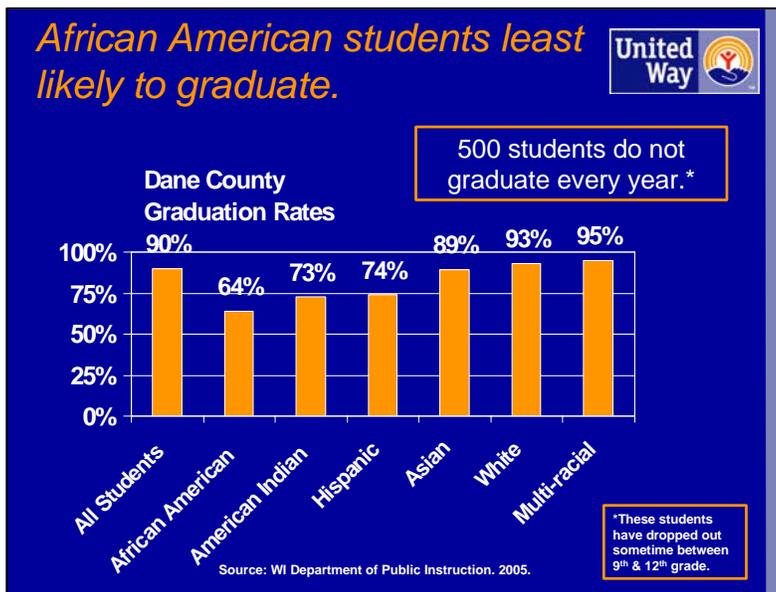
Violence, acting out, and increasingly destructive behaviors are examples of concerns that are often seen in youth who are: not connecting with adults, failing

academically, at-risk for not graduating from high school, and facing a difficult future comprised of

Juvenile Crimes Committed Throughout Dane County

% of Juvenile populations

Dane Co., Madison 3.9, Fitchburg 1.5, Sun Prairie 0.39, Middleton 0.33, Stoughton 0.46, Waunakee 0.16, Verona 0.25, Dane Co. 0.9

■ Juvenile 2003 ■ Juvenile 2004 □ Juvenile 2005

multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. More specifically, a lack of skills and insufficient educational attainment, coupled with a myriad of other barriers, frequently leads to a bleak future. Oftentimes, these youth are either unable to earn a sufficient wage that will sustain them above the poverty level, or incarcerated in the future.

The issue of disconnected and violent youth has implications for three of our seven Agenda for Change areas: *reducing violence, student achievement, and access to*

health care. Our intent is to keep our youth connected to school and prepare them for a constructive future and economic self sufficiency.

Why this matters

- It's a **safety** issue - When Dane County is safer for our youth, it is safer for all of us. Unfortunately, juvenile arrests in Dane County increased dramatically from 2003 to 2004, with the types of crimes committed becoming more violent. In 2005 we began to see a decrease in youth crime in communities across the county with the exception of the City of Madison and Fitchburg. Disconnected youth who are neither in school nor employed have too much time on their hands and are more likely to get involved in crime.
- It's an **economic** issue – Within two years in Dane County, the number of people "aging out" of the workforce will increase considerably; more people will be leaving the workforce than are entering[1]. Many disconnected and violent youth will not have the skills to replace the retiring Baby Boomer generation. Conversely, those who have an education along with 21st century skills are much more likely to obtain jobs with health benefits.
- It's an **education** issue – Currently, 7.8% of Dane County adults over the age of 25 do not have a high school degree. This proportion will likely increase dramatically in the future because the graduation rate is decreasing. Additionally, 22.3% of Dane County workers over 25 years of age have no education beyond a high school diploma. Because the demand for skilled workers is predicted to increase, it is imperative that young people have access to basic skills training and stronger programs to help them succeed.
- It's a **health** issue **-** Through our local research, we know that between 13% and 15% of our children and youth are experiencing mental health issues that interfere with their ability to learn. Research shows a strong co-relationship between mental health and alcohol and other drug use. Thus, it is not surprising that 630 youth reported consuming alcohol 10 or more times within the last 30 days according to the 2005 Dane County Youth survey. Moreover, 90% of adults with alcohol or other drug addictions started using when they were adolescents**.**
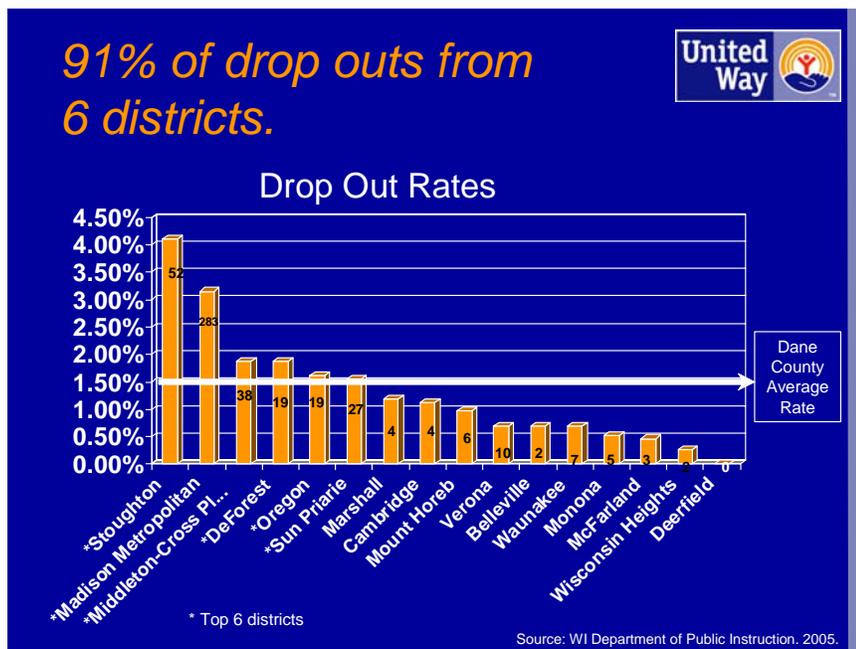
Through our research we know that signs of mental and emotional disconnection can begin as early as elementary school but is most evident in middle school. The physical disconnection becomes most

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[1] Center on Wisconsin Strategy, The Seeds of Workforce Change, April 2006.

evident in high school through increased absence, habitual truancy, acting out, rebelliousness demonstrated by violence, and dropping out of school all together (see appendix A).
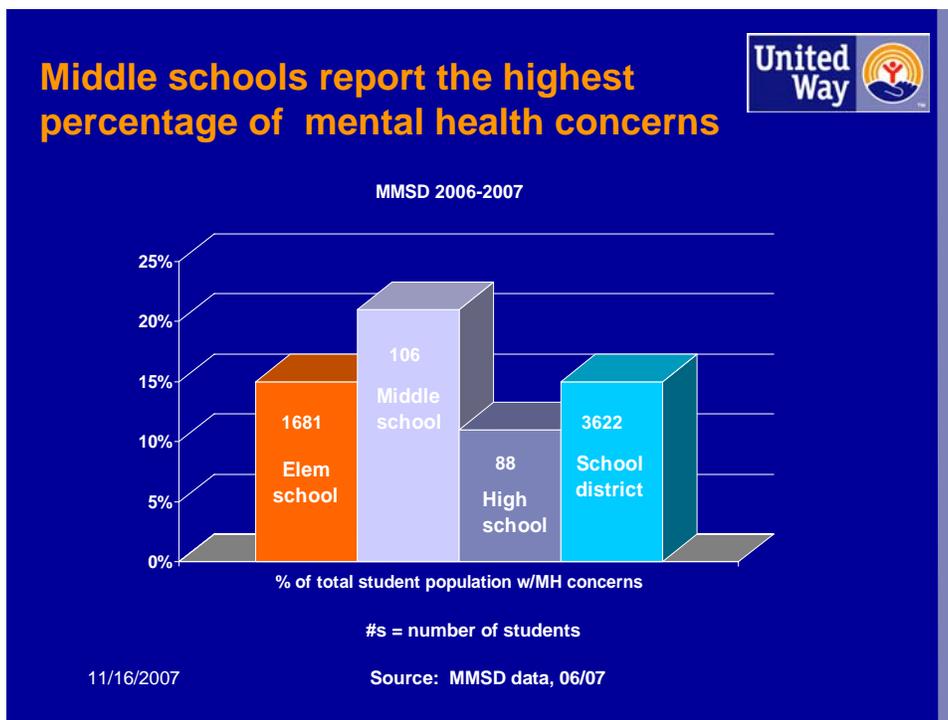
Despite efforts to re-engage youth through alternative educational programming, we still have about 500 youth in Dane County that don't graduate every year. Without a high school degree, these young people find themselves in a revolving door of unskilled, low paid and non-benefited jobs.
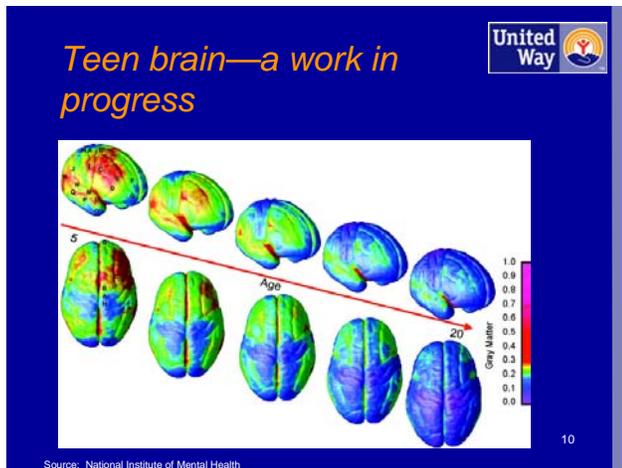

II. National Research

A. Brain Development

The human brain continues to develop well into early adulthood. At one time, it was thought that the foundation of the brain's architecture was laid down by the age of five or six – indeed, 95 percent of the structure of the brain has been formed by then. In recent years, however, researchers have discovered profound changes in the structure of the brain that appear relatively late in child development.

Although teenagers are capable of learning a lot, the parts of their brains responsible for controlling emotions and decision-making are still developing. As their brains undergo rewiring, teenagers show limitations in the areas of motivation, emotional control, and judgment.

According to the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, both national and Wisconsin criminal arrest trends peak during adolescence. Research in the field of adolescent brain development has confirmed that youth are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors and are less able to consider long-term consequences.[2] Further, "changes in adolescent brain development that are specific to puberty have their primary effects on motivation and emotion. These changes manifest as mood swings, increased conflict with parents, a greater tendency for risk-taking and rule-breaking, increased draw

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[2] "Rethinking the "juvenile" in Juvenile Justice, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, March 2006.

toward novel experiences and strong sensations, and …an increased risk of emotional disorders (particularly depression in adolescent girls)." Because the prefrontal cortex is the last area of the brain to develop, the consequences of these emotionally-laded behaviors are not often considered by teens. "[3]

National Institute of Mental Health researchers have discovered a second wave of production of gray matter, the thinking part of the brain, just prior to puberty. This gray matter maturation begins at the back of the brain and flows toward the front – the areas of planning, impulse control and reasoning.[1]

Their still-developing brains make teenagers particularly vulnerable to risky behavior, such as participating in extreme sports and driving too fast. Alcohol and other drug involvement amplify these vulnerabilities. Additionally, youth are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors in the company of peers. Adolescents will often acknowledge the consequences of their behavior in a classroom and around the dinner table. However, in the company of their friends and in a more relaxed environment, they do not always think about these consequences. Although youth understand the difference between right and wrong, in some circumstances and environments they make decisions without regard for the long-term impact.

B. Investment in Education Impacts Graduation Rate

The Justice on Policy Institute has done research on the investment in quality education and its impact on reducing youth crime and increasing graduation rates. They have found that increased investment in quality education can have a positive impact on public safety.[4]

More specifically, these researchers found that a 5% increase in the number of males who graduate from high school would result in a $5 billion dollar annual savings in crime-related expenses. They also found that of the 10 states reporting the highest percentage of population with a high school diploma or above, 9 had a lower violent crime rate than the national average. The ten states with the highest levels of educational attainment are Minnesota, Utah, Montana, New Hampshire, Alaska, Washington, Kansas, Wyoming, Wisconsin and Connecticut (listed in ranking order).

According to the Harvard Family Research Project, adolescents need trusting and caring relationships to be successful in school and in life. Family involvement in education remains a powerful predictor of various adolescent outcomes. Perhaps most importantly, increasing family involvement relates to higher rates of college enrollment.[5]

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[3] Dahl, Ronald, M.D., "Affect Regulation, Brain Development, and Behavioral/Emotional Health in Adolescence," CNS Specdtrums, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 2001.
[4] Justice Policy Institute, Education and Public Safety August 30, 2007
[5] Harvard Family Research Project Harvard Graduate School of Education, Family Involvement Makes a Difference – Evidence that family involvement promotes school success for every child of every age, No. 3 in series Spring 2007

III. National Research Supporting Strategies

A. Community Leadership Teams

The National League of Cities has many years of experience helping communities around the country bring people together around issues that impact our youth. Their expertise lies in bringing systems together to form cross-system leadership teams that address identified issues for youth and their families. One difficulty that they have found is that no single agency or system wants to take the lead and act as the coordinators of this work. Thus, by helping to form community leadership teams, they are much more successful in bringing the community together around issues[6].

The National League of Cities has facilitated many examples of success, but their work in San Diego provides clear results. In San Diego the cross-system of collaboration includes a build-in evaluation capacity, a drive for efficiency, a commitment to spend money saved on deeper programming, and an embrace of data and information sharing. Through their guidance, the San Diego community leadership team proposed system reforms and reduced juvenile justice costs 58%.

B. Increasing Student Engagement

The Mentoring Partnership Program of Minnesota began in 2003 as part of a National movement to provide youth with quality mentoring. At risk students who work with mentors were 55% more likely to succeed academically than those students at risk of academic failure who do not work with mentors. In addition to academic support, this program also included an employment preparation component as outlined in the Commonwealth Development Inc. Mentoring for Success[7].

In addition to graduation mentors, early career exploration is often cited as an influential strategy in increasing student engagement. Two Programs in Maine- Project Reach and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) - have found that early career exploration increases student engagement which in turn leads to increased graduation rates. Middle school students participating in Project Reach improved their Grade Point Average (GPA) (average increase of 63%) as well as their school attendance (average increase of 38%). The JAG model has a 90% graduation and completion rate for the participants in their program. In 2004 the graduation rate was 90.9% with 61.6% of the participants going on to full-time employment, 41.2% going on to post-secondary education and 87.1% in full-time placement (military, part-time employment with part-time post secondary education, full-time post-secondary education or full-time civilian employment).

According to the Learning Points Associates, students who are engaged in learning are actively seeking meaningful information that relates to their own lives. In other words, engaged students are able to find immediate connections to their real life experiences.[8]

The use of teen (or peer) courts, where consequences are decided by a group of the offender's peers, has been successful in significantly reducing rates of recidivism, and preventing further delinquent activity. In Jefferson County, Wisconsin, a study found a recidivism rate of only 7% for offenders who completed the program as well as significant cost savings.[9]   In an evaluation of teen courts in Alaska, Arizona, and Missouri, the Urban Institute reported teen court might be a better alternative to the regular

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[6] Beyond City Limits—Cross-system collaboration to Reengage Disconnected Youth, National League of Cities, Institute for Youth Education and Families, 2007.
[7] Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development", Jekielik Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002
[8] Learning Point Associates, Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act, Using Student Engagement to Improve Adolescent Literacy
[9] Rethinking the Juvenile in Juvenile Justice, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, March 2006.

juvenile justice process in jurisdictions that do not, or cannot, provide a meaningful response for every young, first-time nonviolent offender.[10]

C. Parent Support

Studies after study have found strong correlations between the quality of parent-child relationships and graduation rates. However, relatively little attention has been paid to supporting the parents of adolescents. Providing increased access to parent education and family support programs can help parents negotiate conflicts or crises resulting in a decrease in problems that can lead their children to leave school.[11]

When it comes to parent support, most people think of helping parents learn to be better parents through skill development programs or through programs geared towards preventing child abuse and neglect. Others think of helping parents get their children prepared and ready to begin Kindergarten. On the contrary, once a child enters school, a parent's need for support does not end. Through our local community engagement parents repeatedly mentioned the need for emotional support for parents of teens and young adults. No national research linking parent support to reducing habitual truancy and graduation rate has been found.

D. Early Identification and Treatment of Mental Health Issues

CBITS: The Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) program began in Los Angeles, CA in 2000 and has been adapted for implementation in schools in Dane County. This research-based ~~proven~~ early intervention program screens youth in sixth grade for symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. The program also provides short term group intervention in concert with schools and parents. Several national studies have documented statistically significant improvement in PTSD symptoms for students receiving this intervention. At three-month follow-up, CBITS students reported significantly greater reduction of PTSD symptoms than a control group that was put on a waiting list prior to treatment (64% reduction from baseline compared with a 34% reduction from baseline). The same pattern was true for symptoms of depression – a 47% reduction in symptoms from baseline for CBITS students compared with 24% for the wait-listed control group[12].

Anger Coping: Anger Coping is a cognitive behavioral approach that has been found to produce significant reductions in aggressive and antisocial behavior in children. This intervention teaches anger coping skills to 8-12 year olds. Think First is a similar cognitive skills training program for students who are 13-18 years of age. National studies on the Anger Coping methodology have found that improvements in children's aggressive behaviors were accompanied by increases in teachers' daily ratings of children's on-task behavior in the classroom. This intervention has also been shown to improve grade-level achievement in mathematics and reading (12%, significantly higher than the system-wide improvement over the same period of time)[13].

[10] "The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders," Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Dept. of Justice.
[11] The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Indicator Brief – Reducing the High School Dropout Rate, July 2005
[12] Stein, et al, 2003.
[13] Larson, J. and Lochman, J.E., 2002, Helping schoolchildren cope with anger: A cognitive-behavioral intervention, Guilford Press.

E. Drop-Out Recovery
National Drop-Out Prevention Center/Network

The National Drop-Out Prevention Center has identified 15 strategies that help reduce dropout rates while also increasing graduation rates. The Center's work began in 1986 as a clearing house for issues related to drop-out prevention and increased National graduation rates. The DDVY model incorporates several of the strategies that have been identified by the National Drop-Out Prevention Center. Their 15 strategies are: systemic renewal, school-community collaboration, safe learning environments, family engagement, early childhood education, early literacy development, mentor/tutoring, service-learning, alternative schooling, after-school opportunities, professional development, educational technology, individualized instruction, career and technology education[14]. Given that our strategies are aligned with these 15 strategies, we are confident that our overall plan will be successful as well.

In Philadelphia, out-of-school youth may re-enroll in school via two entry points. One is located in school district facilities; the other is hosted at several community-based agencies with funding from the workforce system. Young people reconnect by engaging in alternative education, advancing on a relatively rapid track toward graduation and gaining occupations skills. The entry points are mutually reinforcing and coordinate their work. School district staff review and approve off-site curriculums while also offering high school academic credits for this work. Over a 3-year period ending in 2005, this dual entry point strategy, along with other collaborative strategies, reenrolled 1200 youth and reduced youth homicide by 40%.[15]

Operation Fresh Start (OFS) in Madison has been recognized by the Wisconsin Governor's office as an exemplar program in drop-out recovery. Graduates (80%) from OFS have either gone on to post-secondary schooling or continued with their employment in the construction field. 90% of the participants in the OFS program have had no further contact with the corrections system.

IV. Local Data
A. Delegation Findings

1. Safety

Youth violence is considered a national public health problem according to the US Surgeon General, National Institutes of Health, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians, USDHHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and Rand among others.
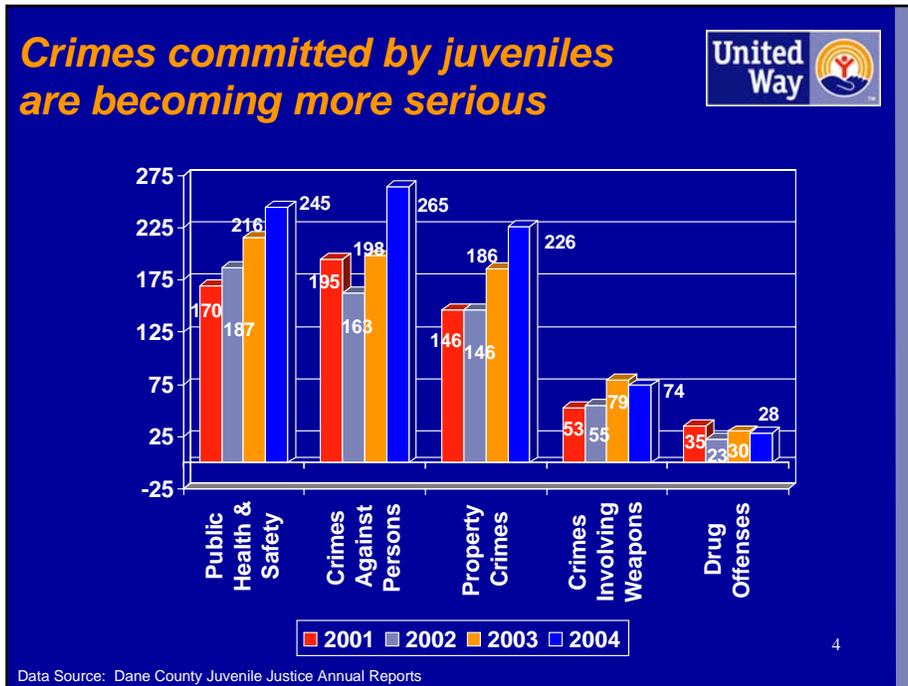

Juvenile crime remains higher than adult crime

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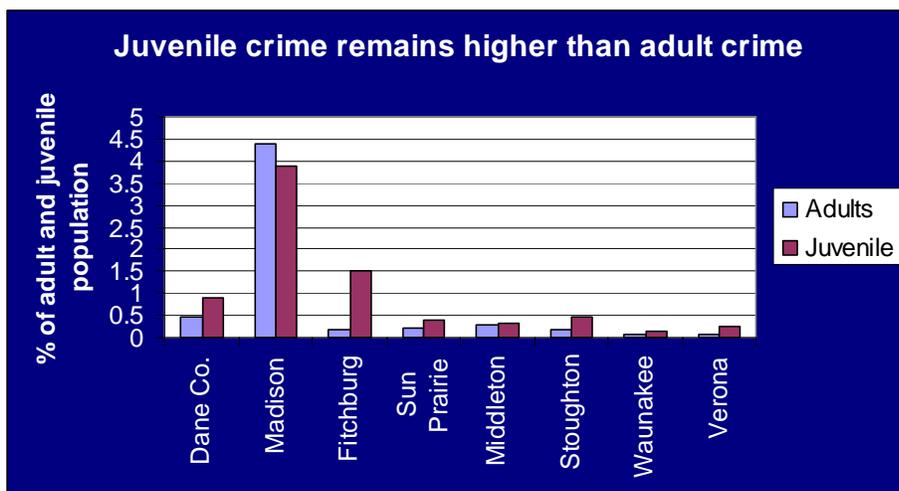
[14] Minnesota Commonwealth Fund Study, 1998
[15] Beyond City Limits, ibid.

Youth crime in Dane County is increasing at a rate that is almost double that of adults.
We have defined violence broadly, from less serious acts such as misbehaving, acting out, and self-harm—including aggressive behaviors such as verbal abuse, bullying, hitting, slapping, or fist fighting—to more serious acts such as aggravated assault, robbery, rape, and homicide. Our youth have also demonstrated such silent behaviors as drinking and drug use, becoming disengaged, and dropping out of school.

Crimes committed by juveniles are becoming more serious

United Way

	Public Health & Safety	Crimes Against Persons	Property Crimes	Crimes Involving Weapons	Drug Offenses
2001	170	195	146	53	35
2002	187	163	146	55	23
2003	216	198	186	79	30
2004	245	265	226	74	28

Data Source: Dane County Juvenile Justice Annual Reports

Included in this increase in youth violence is an increase in violent crimes among females. Female crimes of aggression have increased by 53% over the past 10 years. Property damage, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest offenses have increased over the past years; while drug crimes among our youth have seen a decrease. Dane County has over 500 youth in the justice system with African Americans represented at a higher rate than their counterparts. Youth are most likely to become involved in the justice system between the ages of 13 and 17.

Youth heavily involved in juvenile justice miss critical opportunities to prepare for post-secondary education, develop professional skills, and take advantage of employment opportunities. Truant youth have been found to be involved in criminal acts such as burglary, auto theft, and vandalism. Therefore, communities with high rates of truancy are likely to have correspondingly high rates of daytime criminal activity.[16]

Juvenile offenders who graduate from high school have lower levels of literacy and math skills making it difficult to compete in an already tight employment market[17].

2. Employment

From the Dane County Youth Survey, we know that youth want to be employed, but have difficulty finding employment. In particular, youth who've been involved in the justice system are far less likely to find viable employment opportunities, if any[18]. This inability to find employment increases our youths' frustration and leads to more opportunities for crime or violence. In addition, once a youth finds employment, their lack of skills often results in job failure. With the Baby Boomer generation beginning to retire from the workforce, employment opportunities are available. However, today's disconnected youth lack the interpersonal and job skills that are needed to find and sustain employment.

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[16] Finding effective solutions to truancy, What Works Wisconsin, Issue #5, July 2007.
[17] National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or at Risk, June 2006
[18] Kate Elvidge, Dept. of Corrections, Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth, May, 2007

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) reports that as our workforce "ages-out" they cannot be replaced by the youth who are entering the workforce without a high school credential or the necessary job skills[19]. It is therefore important to Dane County's economic viability to address these barriers that threaten the health of its future workforce. The industries most likely to need skilled workers are healthcare, biotechnology, construction trades and manufacturing. Health care currently accounts for 9% of employment in the region and is rapidly growing. Education is 11%, Manufacturing is 17%, Information/Professional Services/Other Services is 15%, Leisure and Hospitality 9%, Government 9%, Retail and Wholesale Trade 16%, Construction/Mining/Natural Resources 5% and Transportation/Utilities is last at 3%[20]

Dane County is experiencing growth in technical jobs, and is providing our youth with internships (or at least exploration) beginning in middle school. These experiences will help them gain knowledge and skills in this area. The earlier that career exploration and job readiness begins, the better off we will be[21].

Through several community meetings with residents of Dane County, we know that our youth would like the community's help in learning how to write a resume and practice doing interviews which will help prepare them to find and maintain employment[22].

3. Education

Youth disconnect in different ways- some act out through violence, some give up on academic success, and some simply stop attending school. High schools are increasingly seeing mental health and substance abuse issues in students who are habitually truant.
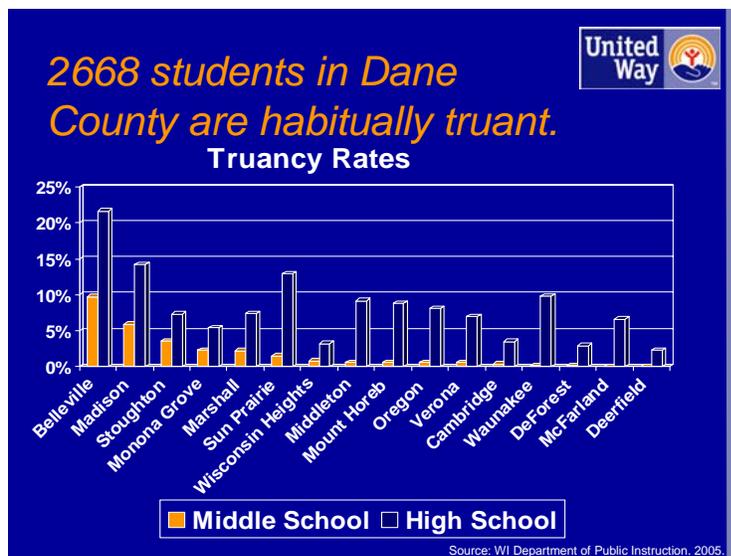
The delegation identified habitual truancy as a key predictor **of** a youth dropping out of school. In 2005, 2,668 Dane County youth were habitually truant[23]. Beginning in 6th grade we begin to see youth mentally

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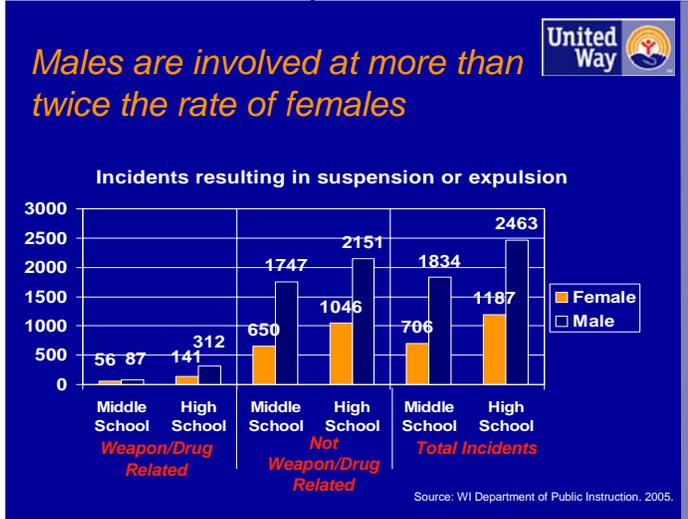[19] "The State of Working Wisconsin 2006," The Center on Wisconsin Strategy.
[20] "Seeds of Workforce Change" A Regional Approach to Improving Our Economic Landscape in Southwest & South Central Wisconsin Executive summary 2006
[21] The State of Working Wisconsin 2006," The Center on Wisconsin Strategy.
[22] United Way of Dane County, Community Engagement with Youth at Wright Middle School and Warner Park, 2007

and emotionally disconnect. Physical disconnection begins through skipping classes which can quickly move to habitual truancy. Habitual truants are then more likely to completely drop out of school**.**
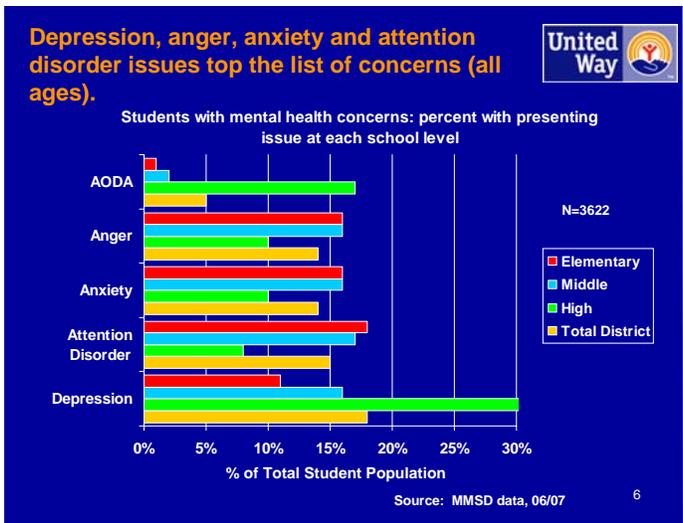

Males are involved at more than twice the rate of females

Incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion

Source: WI Department of Public Instruction. 2005.

"Truancy has negative effects on students who miss classroom instruction time and are, therefore, less likely to complete high school…reducing the truancy rate will lead to higher rates of high school completion which will improve the employment prospects of these children…and a beneficial effect within a community in terms of reduction of welfare recipients, of anti-social behaviors, the use of social services, as well as a corresponding increase in consumer activity and taxes to support community activities such as schools."[24]

Parental and school involvements are key components to a child's academic success.

Students who lack connection at home and school tend to fade into the background or become involved in risky behaviors. Risky behaviors, such as experimenting with alcohol and drug usag**e,** is often found with disconnected youth and may lead to suspension or expulsion.

Depression, anger, anxiety and attention disorder issues top the list of concerns (all ages).

Students with mental health concerns: percent with presenting issue at each school level

N=3622

Elementary
Middle
High
Total District

% of Total Student Population

Source: MMSD data, 06/07

The average school dropout costs society more than $200,000 in excess criminal justice, social service, and health care costs over the course of a lifetime.[25]

If our youth do not graduate from high school or receive their GED or HSED, they are not able to go on to post-secondary schooling, or become an apprentice in skilled trades. According to the 2006 MATC Graduate Employment Report, students who graduate with a two-year associate degree will earn hundreds of thousands more dollars more

during their working years than those with only a high school diploma. Of the 2005-06 MATC graduates, 96.6% are employed in Wisconsin, 81% work in the MATC District and graduates with an Associate degree earn an average of $32,730 in their field.[26] Nationally, the United States Census Bureau's 2005 Current Population Survey estimated annual earning power as follows:

- $19,169 – high school dropout
- $28,645 – high school graduate
- $51,554 – college graduate
- $78,093 – advance degree

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[23] Wisconsin Statute 118.16 defines a habitual truant as "a pupil who is absent without an acceptable excuse for part or all of 5 or more days on which school is held during a school semester."

[24] II. Truancy, A. Yang and Hardin L.K. Coleman, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of Wisconsin—Madison, no date.

[25] Finding effective solutions to truancy, What Works, Wisconsin, Issue #5, July 2007, University of Wisconsin—Madison and University of Wisconsin—Extension.

[26] June 2007 MATC News for You, an update on Madison Area Technical College for our government and community leaders

Nearly half of former high school students surveyed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison[27] said that boring classes were a major factor in their decision to drop out. Research discovered students are selective about cutting classes because of classroom practices. In classes with high cutting, students were often assigned large quantities of written "seat work" and independent silent reading. Classes with more interactivity were better attended.

In a survey of Dane County superintendents and assistant superintendents, they identified the 5 skills all teachers need to develop to keep students engaged. This list is on Appendix B.

Efforts to keep youth engaged can involve placing youth in alternative school programming which offer different classroom experiences. Most alternative schools offer a combination of classroom time, applied and service learning experiences. Many youth find the alternative school setting easier to "fit in." Alternative classrooms are much smaller than typical high school classrooms and students have more one-on-one time with the teachers. The student/teacher ratio is much smaller in these settings which can provide great benefits to students who are seeking an adult role model with whom to connect. The 16 school districts in Dane County offer multiple alternative programs, many of which are linked to employment training and community-based organizations. However, these alternative programs only have capacity for approximately 600 students.

4. Mental Health

Local research in 2005 provided evidence that 13-15% of our children and youth are experiencing mental health issues that interfere with their learning. This data is consistent with national data. The most common concerns were depression, anger, anxiety, and impulsivity. Middle schools reported the highest proportion of students with these issues. Research indicates that mental health issues have a strong co-relationship to substance use and abuse, which often leads to violence.[28]

Percentage of students from low-income families

Source: MMSD data, first semester 05/06
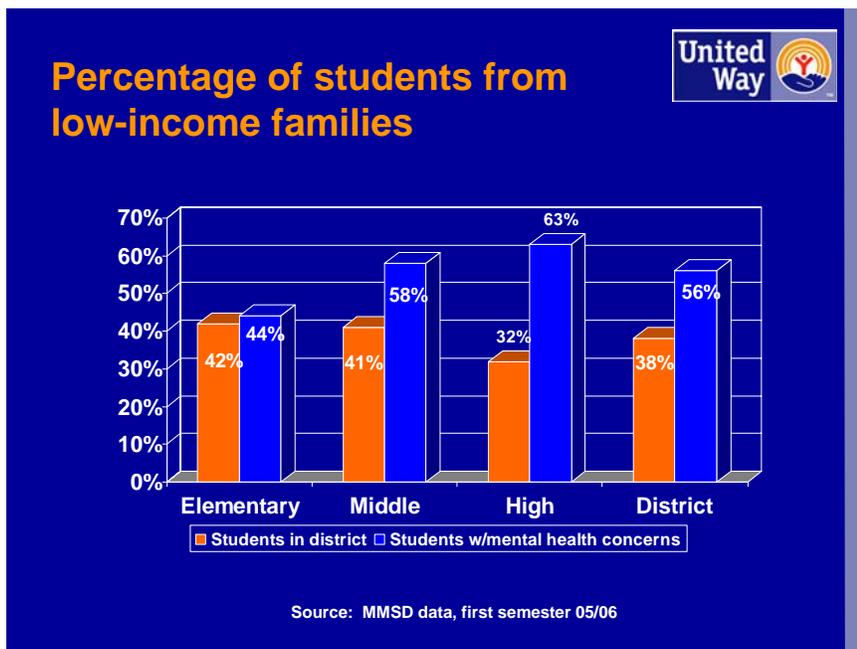
Madison Metropolitan School District data suggests that African American students and students from low-income families are more likely to have mental health concerns. In addition, local data suggests that a larger proportion of students who are truant deal with mental health issues than those who are not.

Many youth have experienced some type of trauma in their lives that prevents them from focusing on academics. In fact research tells us that 1 in 4 youth will experience a traumatic event by their 16th birthday. These kids often report "… difficulty

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[27] Finding effective solutions to truancy, ibid.
[28] Scott Cauldwell – Clinical AODA Evaluator for UW Hospital and Clinics - AODA/Mental Health presentation to the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth, July 18, 2007

concentrating in school, not being able to stop thinking about the traumatic event, being easily startled and having nightmares… classic symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder."[29] Given this information, a new initiative called Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) provides screening and intervention for 6th graders who are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. In 2004 over 3,400 students in 5th and 6th grades were screened. 29% of the 3,400 screened had witnessed or been victims of violence in the preceding year. 12% of these youth showed signs of both PTSD and depression.

B. Mapping the Community Resources

Delegation members were able to identify local resources for both parents and youth. However, the capacity of these programs is inadequate. (See appendix C)

C. Our Community Engagement

United Way of Dane County has a long history of bringing people and systems together to work on complex issues that impact and affect the human condition. The intent with our community engagement was to understand disconnected and violent youth in Dane County, and to hear from them and their support systems. In the process, we met with parents of 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students, parents of disconnected and violent high school students, disconnected and adjudicated youth, and young adults seeking to re-enter education, learn job skills, and become employed.   Our Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth meetings provided an opportunity for specialists in various areas to add their research and expertise to the collective background and experience of those in the Delegation. This process allowed the Delegation to fully discuss the issues from a variety of perspectives. (See appendix D)

Our Major Findings From Our Six Community Engagements (with 200 + participants) throughout Dane County.

Parents Top 6 Wishes for Their Youth in High School:
- Academic Success and Job/Career
- Self-Esteem & State of Mind
- Positive Friends/Stay out of Trouble/Be Socially Responsible
- Safety/Feel Safe
- Family Stability
- Productive Members of Society

Youth Goals, Hopes and Dreams
- Job: finding, interviewing practice and assistance with resumes
- Scholarships to post-secondary education
- Social Activities
- Respect, support/help, trust and understanding from adults
- Early career exploration/job options

Research tells us that high maternal expectations for educational achievement are directly associated with higher student math and reading scores. When adolescents perceive that their parents have high educational goals, they have more interest in school, greater academic self-regulation and higher goal pursuits. There is evidence that African American parents' expectations have an even greater effect on 8th and 9th grade math when parents also communicate to their young adolescents that academic success is defined by effort, rather than by a desire to outperform others.[30]

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[29] James Van Den Brandt, LCSW, Mental Health Center of Dane County. "Child and Adolescent Traumatic Stress" presentation to the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth, July 18, 2007.
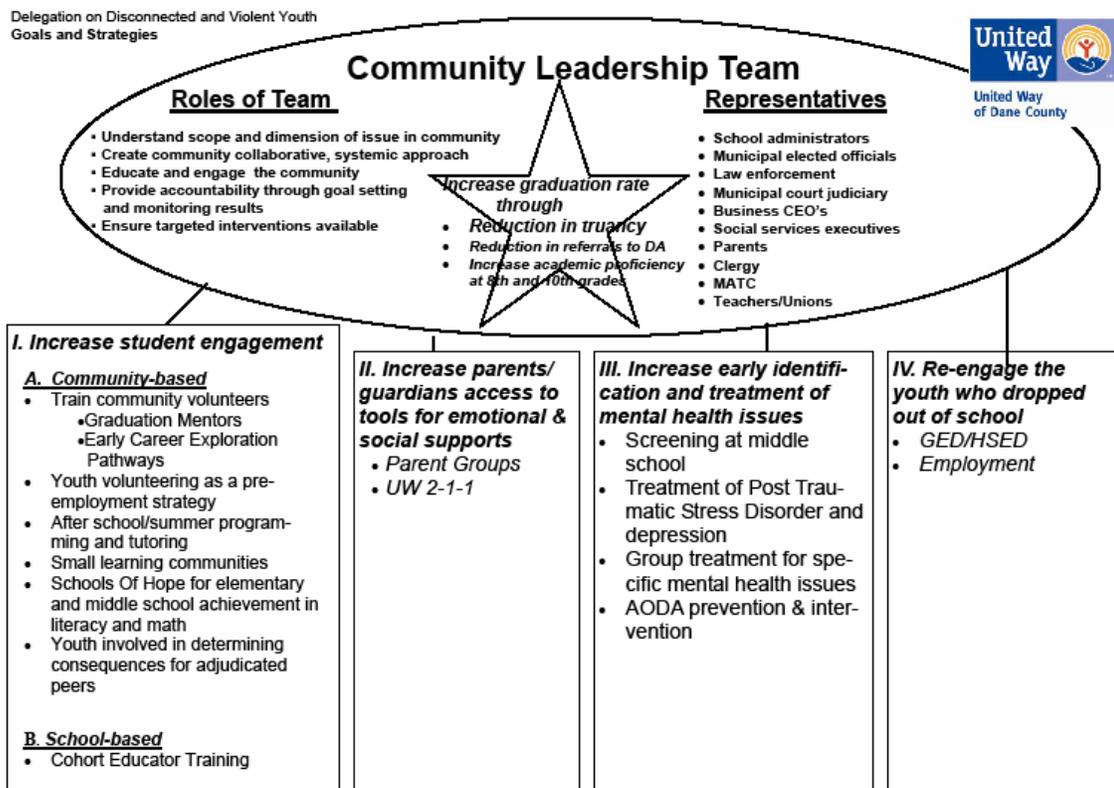[30] Harvard Family Research Project No. 3 Spring 2007

V. Hypothesis

By increasing student engagement in schools and in the community, increasing the emotional and social supports for parents and guardians, providing early screening for mental health issues and re-engaging the youth who have dropped out of school we will increase the graduation rate for young people in Dane County. By doing this we will help secure the economic future of our youth as well as Dane County.

Our goal – To increase graduation rate in Dane County to 95% by 2012. This reduces the non-graduation rate by 50% in Dane County.

VI. Strategies and Resources

Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth
Goals and Strategies

Community Leadership Team

Roles of Team
- Understand scope and dimension of issue in community
- Create community collaborative, systemic approach
- Educate and engage the community
- Provide accountability through goal setting and monitoring results
- Ensure targeted interventions available

Increase graduation rate through
- Reduction in truancy
- Reduction in referrals to DA
- Increase academic proficiency at 8th and 10th grades

Representatives
- School administrators
- Municipal elected officials
- Law enforcement
- Municipal court judiciary
- Business CEO's
- Social services executives
- Parents
- Clergy
- MATC
- Teachers/Unions

I. Increase student engagement

A. Community-based
- Train community volunteers
  - Graduation Mentors
  - Early Career Exploration Pathways
- Youth volunteering as a pre-employment strategy
- After school/summer programming and tutoring
- Small learning communities
- Schools Of Hope for elementary and middle school achievement in literacy and math
- Youth involved in determining consequences for adjudicated peers

B. School-based
- Cohort Educator Training

II. Increase parents/ guardians access to tools for emotional & social supports
- *Parent Groups*
- *UW 2-1-1*

III. Increase early identification and treatment of mental health issues
- Screening at middle school
- Treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression
- Group treatment for specific mental health issues
- AODA prevention & intervention

IV. Re-engage the youth who dropped out of school
- *GED/HSED*
- *Employment*

A. Community Leadership Teams

In each community in which these strategies will be deployed we will establish a Community Leadership Team representing a cross-section of the community best able to collaborate on the work and, research and create local policy, identify and deploy local resources. Just like the Schools of Hope Model which has over 12 years of success in using leadership teams to help coordinate and monitor the strategy implementation, we will also have leadership teams in each of these communities.

These leadership teams will
- Determine the scope and dimension of disconnected youth for their communities
- Create a community collaborate, systemic approach
- Educate and engage the community on this issue

- Provide accountability of the strategies through goal setting and monitoring of results
- Ensure targeted interventions are available.

Leadership teams are successful as the individuals who commit to being a part of these teams. We have identified these key representatives that are critical for the success in each community:
- School administrators
- School board members
- Municipal elected officials
- Law enforcement
- Municipal court judiciary
- Business CEO's/Owners
- Social Services Executives
- Parents
- Clergy/Faith-based Organizations
- MATC
- Teachers/Union Representatives

Each community leadership team will determine a goal for graduation rate and reduction of habitual truancy, and will monitor local data including referrals to the District Attorney's office, and academic proficiency of 8th and 10th graders in literacy and math.

B. Increase Student Engagement
We will increase student engagement in two different aspects: through a community-based response and education-based response.

Community-Based Strategies
Trained Community Volunteers
Through the community-based student engagement, we plan to play off of the Schools of Hope approach of utilizing trained community volunteers to work with students and teachers but this time as "Graduation Mentors". These graduation mentors will work closely with the youth, their parents and teachers to keep each student on a successful path to graduation. Graduation mentors will begin to work with youth as they transition from elementary school into middle school and continue working with them until they graduate from high school and will be assigned to youth showing signs of truancy.

We learned through our community engagement meetings with youth at both Wright Middle School and Warner Park that they need and want to have an adult in their life that they can trust and that will be there with them through graduation. The Graduation mentors will be an adult that they can trust and help guide them through the transitions in grade levels.

The Graduation Mentors will also help the youth understand how the classes that they are taking will relate and be helpful in their future career and employment opportunities. For instance, helping youth understand that algebra helps to develop your critical thinking skills which will be important to help them think through situations and problems that will arise both in life and on the job. Algebra will help develop the skill of thinking problems through to come out with the best solution. Employers will look for team players and people that can get along well with the other employees. Graduation mentors will also have an opportunity to help the student see the real world connection. Like how fractions are used in food services, construction and machine tooling.

Research tells us that the earlier youth begin career exploration, the better. Graduation mentors will also assist in this early career exploration.

Youth Volunteering as a Pre-Employment Strategy
Volunteering can help youth build social skills, problem solving skills and leadership skills. All of these skills will help make youth more marketable to both employers but also schools. This strategy will help reduce truancy and increase academic success by encouraging students to use volunteer experiences on their early resumes to increase their ability to find employment.

After School/Summer Programs and Tutoring
We know that after school between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. as well as summertime are high risk times for youth to engage in risky behaviors and crime since these are times when there are the least amount of youth involved in structured activities. Research shows us that youth who are actively engaged in activities have less time on their hands to get involved in risky behaviors which will reduce crime rates and referrals to the District Attorney's Office, and truancy leading to increased graduation. After-school and summer programming outcomes will be asked to align their outcomes to school attendance, academic achievement and graduation.

Small Learning Communities
Research tells us that smaller class sizes allow a better teacher/child ratio for more personal attention and increased engagement with our youth. However, this is not always possible. Each pilot community will be encouraged to review their teacher/child ratio for areas of improvement. After-school programming can also provide small learning communities in their homework support. And, our Educator Cohort Training will also show teachers ways they can create small learning communities within their classrooms.

Schools of Hope Elementary and Middle School
The current work being done with the successful Schools of Hope tutoring initiative will be expanded and enhanced in each community that adapts the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth strategies. Tutors will continue to work in concert with the classroom teachers to mentor students in reading and math skills.

Peer Court
 Expanding on the Youth Peer Court model, we will continue providing opportunities for youth to learn about consequences and leadership skills by to helping to determine consequences for their peers who have committed crimes. This model has been proven to reduce recidivism in youth, particularly for first-time offenders, and reduction in referrals to the District Attorney's office.
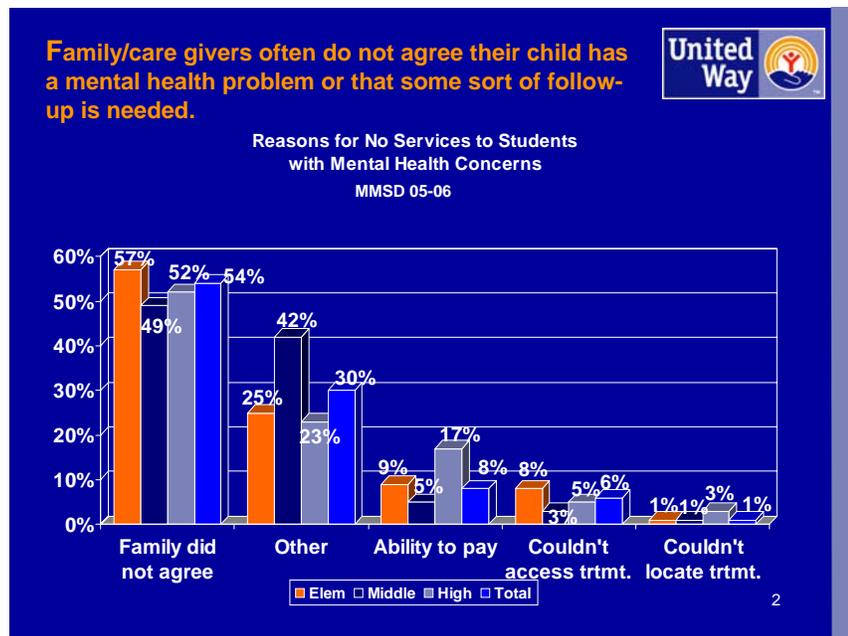
School-Based Strategy

Cohort Educator Training
Unfortunately through our research and conversations with teachers, social service agencies, parents and educators we know that teachers often struggle in being able to engage students in the classrooms causing some of our youth to fail in the traditional classroom settings. Through a train-the-trainer process, we will train teachers on techniques to keep youth engaged in the traditional classroom setting. This training will be provided by Dr.Hardin Coleman and his associates at the School of Education, through the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

The training will not only be available to a cohort of teachers and may include others who are role models that youth look up to or depend on within a school setting. The educator cohort could include such diverse role models as a school custodian, youth resource center director, or principal of the school.   As many as 12 individuals from a school/district will take part in the training, build into their curriculum and then go back and train additional teachers on both the curriculum and the concepts that they have learned. Educators will also learn how to engage parents, move themselves out of the parental role, and link the curriculum to what's important to each child.   Educators may receive 3 graduate credits for successful completion of the training.

C. Increase Parents/Guardian Access to Tools for Emotional and Social Supports

From four different community engagement meetings with parents through out Dane County, we heard the importance of parents knowing where, how and when to access services for themselves and for their children. Parents feel isolated and alone when dealing with the challenges that they are experiencing. Embarrassment and denial often prevent parents from accessing services that they need. The stigmas tied to mental health issues often prevent parents from allowing their children to get the services that they need.

Family/care givers often do not agree their child has a mental health problem or that some sort of follow-up is needed.

Reasons for No Services to Students
with Mental Health Concerns
MMSD 05-06

In addition to the emotional turmoil is the lack of knowing which services can be accessed. Parents want to be able to contact one place and find out about a variety of resources that they can contact to assist them as well as their children.

We are fortunate to have United Way 2-1-1 as a first call for assistance for resources throughout Dane County. UW 2-1-1 has a comprehensive database of programs and services that are available in Dane County that parents can call anonymously thereby giving them the opportunity to get the support they need without losing their dignity or feeling embarrassed.

In addition to the single point to call for assistance, there is also the need for support groups. We will create parent support groups will help parent work together on their issues and not feel so isolated in their concerns over their children.

D. Increase Early Identification and Treatment of Mental Health Issues

Early identification and treatment is critical to removing mental health related barriers that stand in the way of youth academic success. By building on existing prevention and early intervention programs that reach kids in their schools we hope to increase the number of youth in the County who receive early screening and interventions for mental health issues that may negatively affect their attentiveness for learning and have other life-long consequences.

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and FACE-Kids Follow-up
CBITS has shown both national and local success; we will expand this program into each community in which we work. All sixth graders[31] enrolled in the public schools within each school district will be screened for symptoms of PTSD and depression. Students found to be "positive" on the screening measures are then interviewed in an individual meeting with a clinician/school staff member to confirm the screening results. Those who score above clinical cut offs for both exposure to violence *and* PTSD symptoms will be offered the intervention that includes 10 group sessions conducted weekly in the

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[31] Parental consent required for screening.

schools, one-three individual therapy sessions, two parent education sessions and one teacher education session. Therapists who facilitate FACE-Kids groups have been trained to provide the CBITS interventions to students in the Sun Prairie and Madison School Districts. Capacity currently exists to expand this program to a third district.

The majority of students who qualify for a screening interview do *not* end up meeting the dual criteria (PTSD *and* depression) required for participation in CBITS. Most, however, are dealing with mental health concerns that are in some way interfering with their ability to focus and learn. These students are referred back to their schools where follow-up services of some kind may or may not be available. We propose enhancing the capacity of FACE-Kids so that it becomes a primary resource that can design and offer new groups within the schools to meet the needs of these students who are not involved in CBITS.

Anger Management
Mental health data collected by MMSD student services teams during the 06-07 school year indicated 13% of students, K-12, were identified as having problems with anger. This translates to almost 3,200 students in Madison schools. The FACE-Kids program has found "Anger Management" groups to be one of the most frequently requested by schools. A nationally known expert, Dr. James Larson, UW-Whitewater, has provided training to the Madison School District on the evidence-based **Anger Coping Program**, a cognitive-behavioral group intervention to teach anger coping skills to 8-12 year old students, and **Think First**, a similar cognitive skills training program for 13-18 year old students. There is a strong base of research[32] that documents outcomes consistent with improved academic achievement. We propose training FACE-Kids clinical staff to co -facilitate the Anger Coping and Think First programs with staff. Such collaboration leads to greater fidelity, learning and modeling of skills between co-facilitators, and allows for greater expansion of services to this population. Piloting this model on a small scale would also afford the opportunity to obtain pre-post data about the impact of this intervention on reducing violence that results in students being removed from the classroom and not available for learning.

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[32] Larson, J. (2005) *Think First: Addressing aggressive behavior in secondary schools.* New York: Guilford Press. Larson, J. & Lochman, J.E. (2002) *Helping school children cope with anger: A cognitive-behavioral intervention.* New York: Guilford Press.

E. Re-engage the Youth Who Dropped Out of School (age 16-25)
Drop-out recovery differs from the previous outlined prevention strategies; it is our intervention strategy to re-engage the youth who have dropped out of school to help them get their diploma with the added employment skills. Our strategy is to get these youth into a program that provides them with an opportunity to obtain their high school credential (diploma, HSED or GED) and obtain employment in an industry that provides a career ladder, particular for those industries that will have the greatest need for employees over the next 10 years.

Each Community Leadership Team will determine the appropriate outreach for their community, and best intervention of several we will help to make available. The intervention strategy must include education for part of the day and work with the supervision of a job coach for the remainder of the day. Like the successful Operation Fresh Start (OFS) model it accepts youth who apply for their program and show they are ready to change the direction in their lives.

Besides OFS, we will work with Madison Area Technical College to help youth with specific goals, as well as with the Workforce Development Board in the creation and development of industry-specific academies, such as for health care and advanced manufacturing, to provide the combination of education and employment skills.   Students in these academies will spend part of their day in the classroom working towards their high school credential (diploma, HSED or GED) with the remainder of their day learning and receiving hands-on-training to work in their industry-specific field. While they are earning their degree and learning skills through the academy, they will also earn a stipend which will work as an incentive to stay engaged in this educational setting.

VII.   Results and Timeframe

Our work plan for implementing these strategies within the 6 communities that make up 91% of the drop out rate in Dane County are outlined below. Our goal is to reduce the non-graduation rate in each community by 50%.

We will begin working with two communities to pilot the DDVY strategies in early 2008. Oregon has already indicated interest in being a pilot community. A second sight will be determined by January 2008.

Time Frame	Work To Be Completed
October 2007	Meet with pilot community Administrative Team
November	Meet with 1st pilot community Board of Director
	Meet with 2nd pilot community Administrative Team
December	Stakeholder meetings throughout Dane County
January 2008	DDVY Public Report Launch
February	1st Pilot Community – Community Leadership Meeting
March	2nd Pilot Community – Community Leadership Meeting
September	Pilot Communities Implement Strategies
June	Review year 1 of strategy implementation
December	Begin working with 3rd community (Madison?)
June	Review year 2
September 2009	3rd Pilot Begins
September 2010	Pilot in one additional community
September 2011	Pilot in last two communities

June 2012	Review of goal: to increase graduation rate in Dane County to 95% and reduce the non-graduation rate by 50% in Dane County.

Appendices
A-Scroll Timeline for Youth Disconnection
B- Feedback from Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents on skills that need to be developed by all educators
C-Mapping the Community's Resources
D-A summary of our Community Engagement
E-Members of the Delegation on Disconnected and Violent Youth

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