

Diversion, Early Intervention and Prevention: Strategic Programs to Keep Youth and Families Out of Formal Systems

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The Department

- 400 Full Time Employees
- Seven Divisions:
 - Detention (192 beds)
 - Spring Mountain Youth Camp (100 beds)
 - Probation Field Services (August 2021 – 1,200 youth)
 - Health Care Services (July 2021 – 615 youth contacts)
 - Administrative Support Services
 - The Harbor Juvenile Assessment Centers (five locations)
 - Truancy Prevention Outreach Program
- Approximately \$65 million annual budget

Problem Statement

2015

- 13,197 referrals to DJJS Down 6% from 2014
- Average age is 15.6 years old
- 12% of DJJS families are intact
- 54% of DJJS youth had a referral prior to 2012

2014

- 14,090 Referrals
- Average age is 16.5 years old
- 20% of families were intact Down 7% from 2011
- 53% of DJJS youth had a referral prior to 2011

The Research

- Research conducted by the University of Nevada Las Vegas on 423 DJJS clients shows:
 - 70% of DJJS total cases are non-violent misdemeanor offenses;
 - 30% surveyed reported familial issues
 - 30% reported educational issues
 - 70% scored less than 3 of a possible 8 major institutional and personal risk factors that indicate that they are less likely to harm themselves or others
- Youth connected to evidence-based interventions immediately are less likely to escalate within a multitude of systems, i.e.. SS, DFS, DJJS & Adult Justice System

The Research

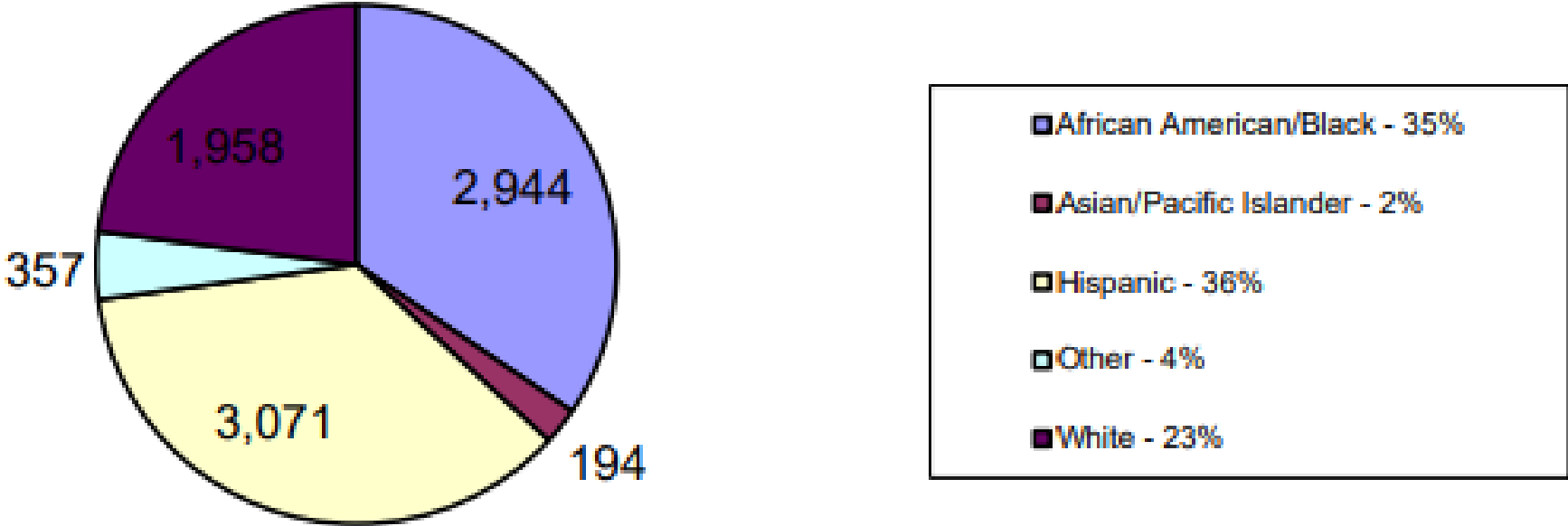
Table 11: High Risk Factors by Type of Legal Category (red = highest risk group)

High Risk Factors	Felony	Gross Misdemeanor	Misdemeanor	Traffic/Status Off.
Family Issues	42	33	30	12
Education Issues	42	43	30	6
Juvenile's Attitude Issues	44	27	23	12
Juvenile Peer Issues	43	26	23	6
Alcohol/Drug Issues	39	24	26	29
Mental Health Issues	25	27	18	0
Runaway Issues	24	24	10	12
Prior Adjudication/Probation	23	11	10	18
Average Risk Across 8 Factors	35.2%	26.9%	21.2%	11.9%

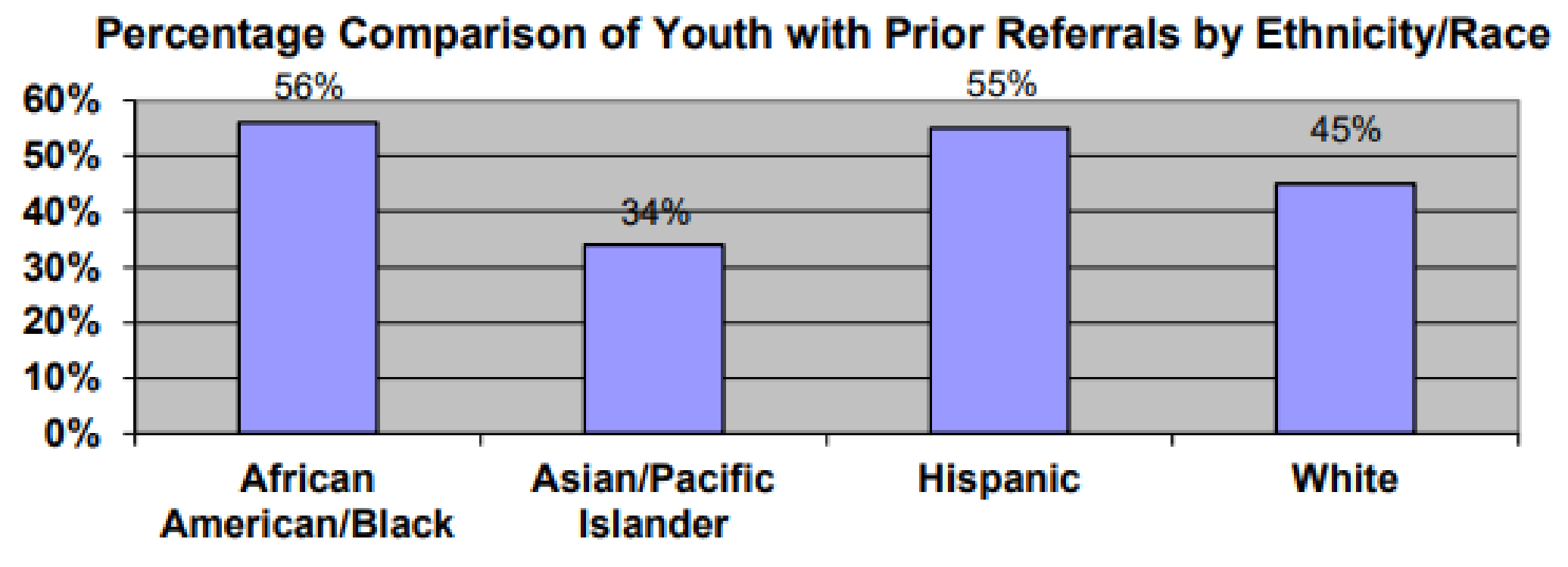
N= 423, Oct 1 - Dec 31, 2015

Disparity Exists

Ethnicity/Race of Referred Youth (2015 Referred Youth – 8,524)



Disparity Exists



Problem Solve with Intentionality

We know where the referrals are coming from;

We know prevention and intervention strategies work;

We know that youth of color are exponentially more likely to be negative system involved;

We know that criminal justice systems in general do not work to reduce crime, they merely displace crime;

We know a school to prison pipeline exists and is supported by public policy;

We know the neighborhoods that need the most services and families that are most at risk;

Solution

Diversion – creating more opportunities for youth with behavioral health and related needs to be safely and appropriately diverted to community-based treatment at critical points of contact

Critical Points of Contact

Child Welfare
Based Diversion

Law
Enforcement
Based Diversion

Probation
Based Diversion

School Based
Diversion
Model

Program Design

- The knowledge and research had been conducted, next was the very intentional step to reduce system involvement by intervening at the earliest point possible, then wrap the child in resources, follow-up to ensure they are staying on the path.

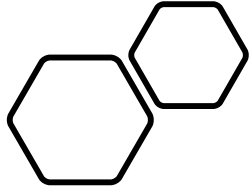
Birth of The Harbor

- Once the data had been examined and the level of risk determined it was decided that the system was capturing far too many low-level offenders into the formal system for a multitude of reasons:
 - Lack of familial supports
 - Addiction related behaviors
 - The criminalization of typical risky teenage behavior
 - Lack of coordinated services aimed at diverting a youth from formal system involvement



More
questions
than
answers...

- Questions that needed answers:
 - Who wanted to participate in opening a Juvenile Assessment Center?
 - What resources would be brought from those agencies?
 - Monetary support or in-kind?
 - Private partners, governmental agencies, combination of both?
 - Elected official support?
 - Location?
 - Law enforcement model versus community support model?
 - Who, where and how to market the program?
 - Creation of a brand?
 - Media attention? Control the expectations?
 - Who do we serve? Justice partners agree?



Soliciting support

- The concept of one child, no wrong door approach to services had never been broached in Clark County.
- Numerous agencies both private and public were operating in the same space with the same families often overlapping services and creating operational inefficiencies.
- Knocking down silos
 - Tough conversations
 - Federal obstacles (HIPPA, FERPA)
 - Historically competitive departments or municipalities

What
resources
were
needed?

- Staff
- Physical plant
- Evidence based interventions
- Operating capital
- Vetted providers
- Case management system
- Validated assessment tools
 - Pediatric Symptom Checklist
 - CRAFFT

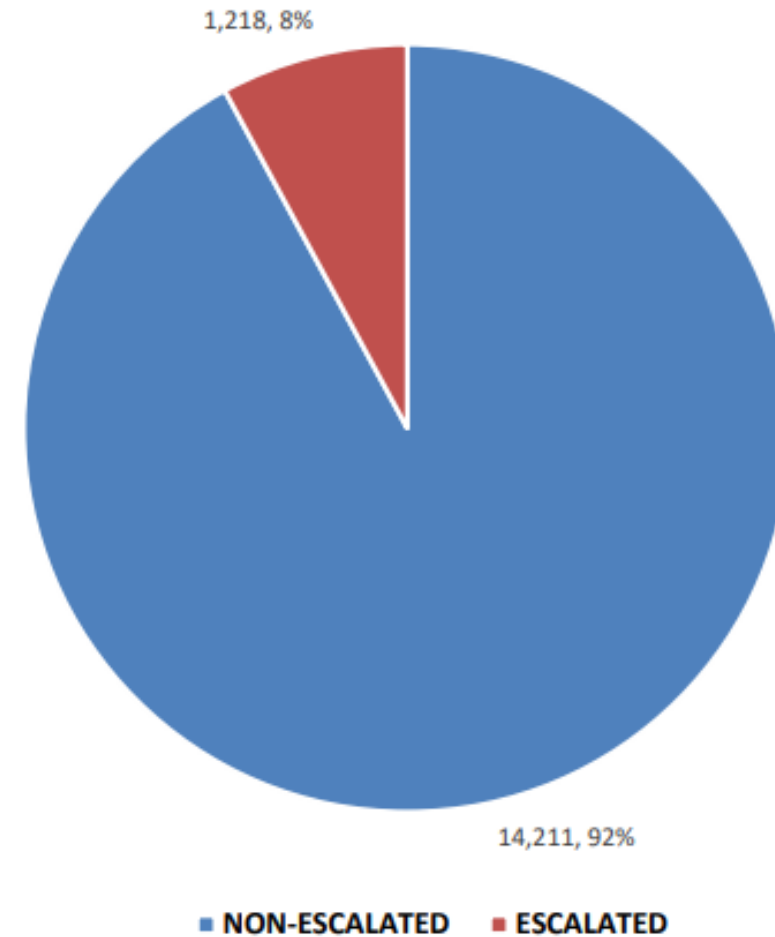
Harbor Partners

- Clark County School District
- City of Las Vegas
- City of North Las Vegas
- City of Henderson
- Eight Judicial District Court
- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
- Clark County District Attorney's Office
- Department of Juvenile Justice Services
- Department of Family Services
- State of Nevada, Department of Health and Human Services
 - Division of Child and Family Services
 - Division of Public Behavioral Health
 - Division of Welfare and Supportive Services
- Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth
- HELP of Southern Nevada
- Workforce Connections

Harbor Outcomes

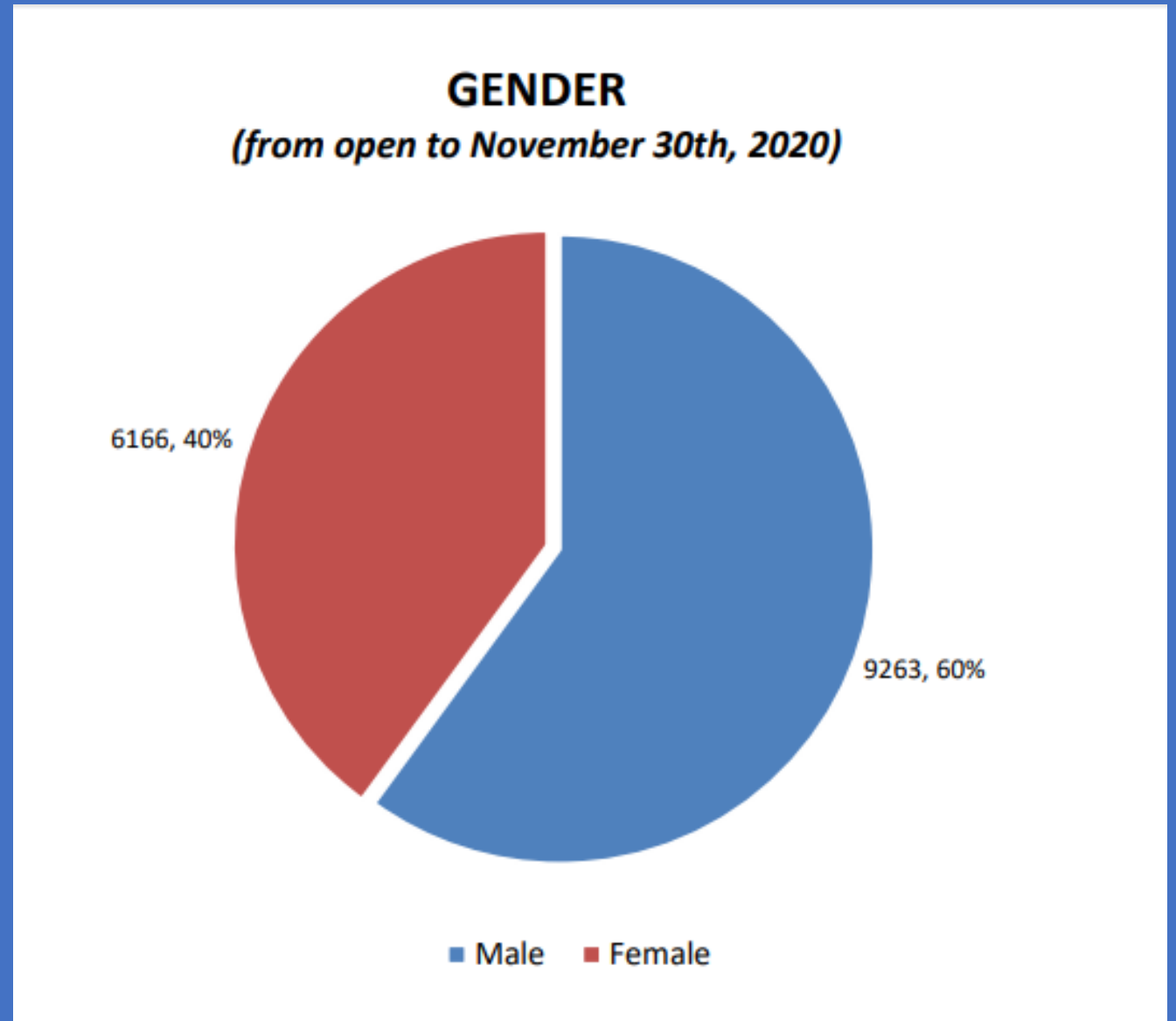
- 92% of all youth referred to the Harbor were not escalating to the juvenile justice system

Total Youth Escalated
(from open to November 30th, 2020)

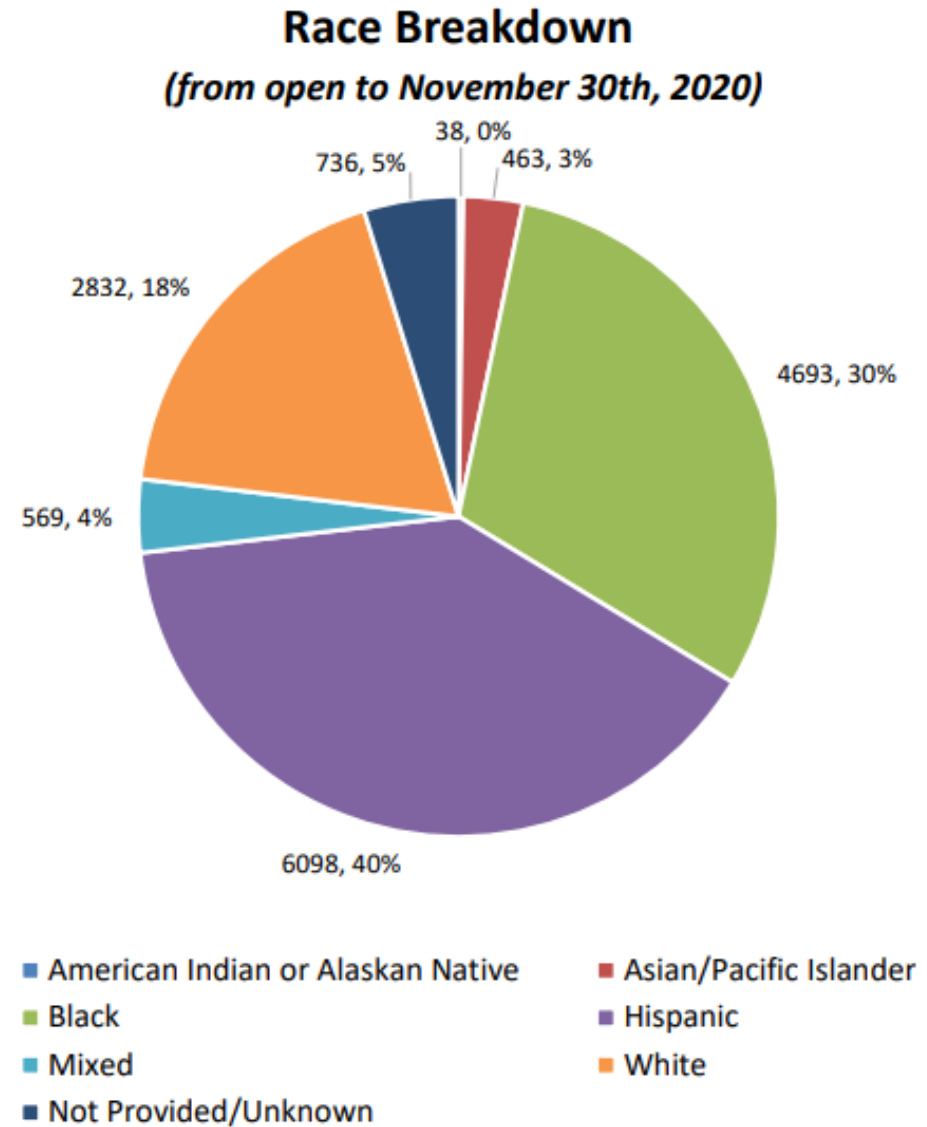


Harbor Demographics

- 60% boys versus 40% girls

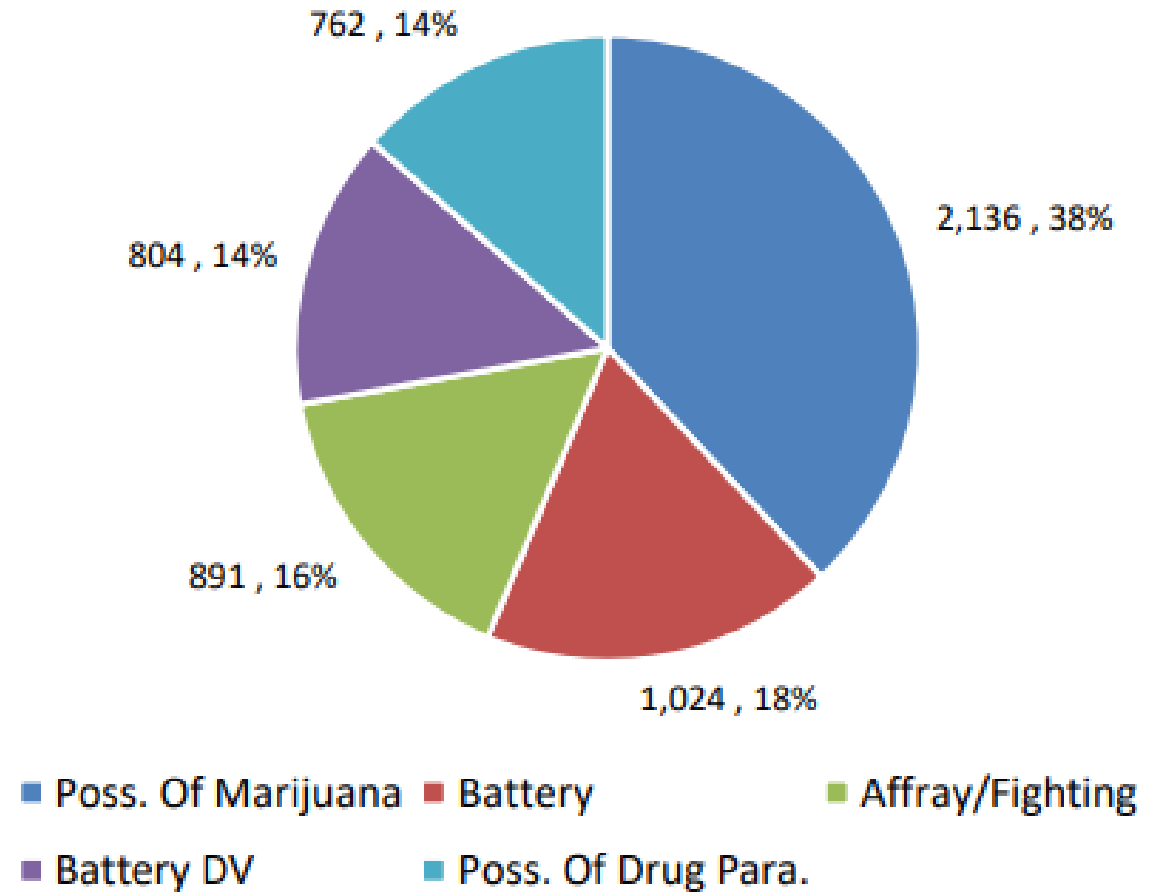


Harbor Demographics




Harbor Offenses

Top 5 Offenses
(from open to November 30th, 2020)



Next Steps

- The Harbor model was showing great results;
- Access to Harbors remained a barrier, so expanding the footprint to other impoverished neighborhoods was a priority;
- School District was largest referral agency, so investing further upstream became the next target to reduce disproportionality within negative systems;



The Truancy Prevention Outreach Program (TPOP)



**Early
Intervention**



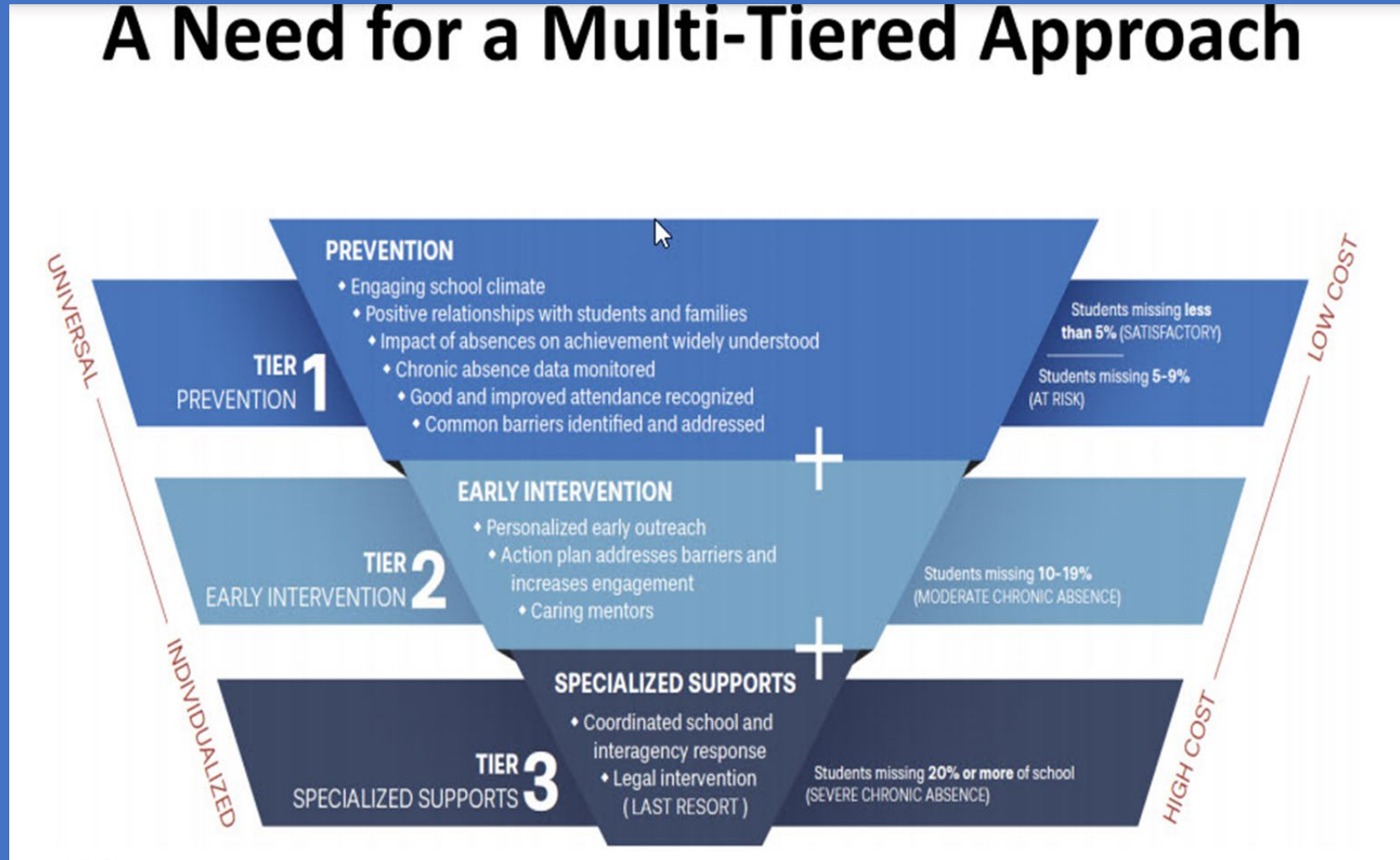
Prevention

Program Goals and Interventions

- Early identification and assessment of chronic absenteeism
- Designed to focus on the family unit
- Provide in-home support
- Assist families with identifying programs/providers to address their immediate needs.
- NCFAS Assessment/Behavioral Interventions
- Develop family centered case planning

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

A Need for a Multi-Tiered Approach



TPOP Launch

- Program Launched October 1, 2020
- COVID/Distance Learning
- Community Navigators
- Community and School-Based Interventions
- 27 Pilot Schools

Program Collaborations

The Clark County School District

Department of Family Services

Department of Social Service

Boy's Town

First Year

- Close to 4,000 Referrals from 223 Schools
- Immediate Mental Health Needs
- Youth and Families Struggling
- Incentives
- Specialized Training and Consultation

Second Year

- Boy's Town School Support Specialists
- 50 new Principals
- Additional TPOP Staff
- Lessons Learned

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