

**REDUCING JUVENILE CRIME
AND DELINQUENCY IN THE
CITY OF SCHENECTADY
A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDED
DIRECTIONS**

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September, 2005
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A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS

Prepared for:
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September, 2005

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SUMMARY

In early 2005, the County and City of Schenectady established a coordinated planning process to assess the state of juvenile delinquency and better address violent juvenile crime within the City of Schenectady. To move this process forward, a Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition (JCEC) Advisory Board was developed and convened. The Advisory Board and its Coordination Committee subsequently engaged CGR (Center for Governmental Research Inc.) to thoroughly analyze and assess juvenile delinquency issues and risk factors in the City of Schenectady, and to help develop recommended directions to reduce juvenile crime in the City.

CGR conducted this work in three phases. In phase 1, CGR reviewed and analyzed a wide range of relevant data and information to better understand juvenile justice issues, challenges, and trends in the City of Schenectady. This comprehensive needs assessment was then organized into a report and presented to the Advisory Board for review and further refinement (the final version of this assessment is included as Section II of this report). In phase 2, CGR and members of the Coordination Committee held interviews and focus groups with over 75 individuals, including key stakeholders in the juvenile justice system, representatives from community provider agencies, concerned parents, and at-risk youth, to obtain their perspectives on the major strengths, issues, and opportunities for improvement in the current juvenile service system in Schenectady. In phase 3, CGR helped working groups composed primarily of members of the Advisory Board transform these findings into specific

recommendations to help reduce or prevent juvenile crime, foster youth development, and promote parental engagement.

The following report presents the work of CGR and the Advisory Board in these three phases. Section II offers comprehensive needs assessment of juvenile crime and delinquency in the City of Schenectady. While this analysis clearly reveals substantial risk factors for, and a growing incidence of, juvenile crime and delinquency in the City, it also underscores the increasing effectiveness of the juvenile justice system in diverting troubled youth from PINS and JD designations, family court proceedings, and outside placements. Section III summarizes the findings from the stakeholder interviews and focus groups. It highlights key environmental factors affecting juvenile crime and delinquency, major issues and service gaps related to at-risk youth and their families, and strengths to build upon in efforts to support youth and reduce delinquent behavior.

Finally, Section IV presents the four recommended directions developed by the Advisory Board and CGR to address juvenile crime and delinquency in targeted areas of the City of Schenectady. Several themes played a guiding role in the development of these recommendations: the desire to target specific communities/neighborhoods; the need to address each side of the equation (prevention, intervention, suppression, and accountability) in order to effectively reduce juvenile delinquency; the desire to promote further collaboration among service providers; and the goal of developing integrated and holistic service approaches. The four key components are:

- ❖ ***Community Probation Officers Program (CPOP)*** – Hire four Community Probation Officers (CPOs) to perform a variety of traditional and nontraditional probation activities during both day and evening hours in the Hamilton Hill and Mt. Pleasant neighborhoods. These officers would be assigned to the Mt. Pleasant Middle School, Schenectady High School, and Hamilton Hill community centers in order to maintain an ongoing neighborhood presence. They would also work closely with schools, police, and other community organizations to ensure appropriate prevention, intervention, suppression, and

accountability services for at-risk youth and those involved in the juvenile justice system.

- ❖ ***Restorative Justice for Juveniles Approach*** – Support efforts to encourage personal responsibility and community service among youth engaged in crime and delinquent behavior, including Juvenile Accountability Boards, victim-offender mediation, and restitution and community service programs.
- ❖ ***Juvenile Vocational Services*** – Provide more structured youth employment, job readiness, and vocational training services in collaboration with community partners.
- ❖ ***Family Support and Development Services*** – Adopt comprehensive family support and parent engagement strategies, back targeted early childhood and family literacy initiatives, and explore the usefulness of family support centers in schools.

Taken together, these four recommended directions, in conjunction with existing services and strategies for at-risk youth, would provide a solid foundation for the City of Schenectady as it moves forward in its efforts to better combat juvenile crime and delinquency.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CGR gratefully acknowledges the following members of the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition's Advisory Board for their enthusiasm toward, and contributions to, this project:

Advisory Board: Hon. Jo Anne Assini, Schenectady County Family Court Judge; Shane Bargy, Director, Schenectady County Youth Bureau; Laurie Bucheldor, Director of Community Impact, United Way of Schenectady; Kevin Burke, First Deputy County Attorney and General Counsel for the Department of Social Services; Pamela Derrick, JCEC Program Coordinator; Michael C. Eidens, JCEC Chair; Philip Fields, Chairman of Children & Families Committee, Schenectady County Legislature; Edward J. Kosiur, Legislator District 2, Schenectady County Legislature; Joseph Mancini, Deputy Director, Schenectady County Probation; Jim Murphy, Hamilton Hill Forum; Beverly Perryman, President, Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association; Marion Porterfield, Site Coordinator, Schenectady Weed & Seed; Connie Richardson, Community Resident/Parent; Kathleen Rooney, Assistant County Manager; Darin Samaha, Schenectady County Office of Community Services; Michael Seber, Assistant Chief, Schenectady City Police Department; Sheila Tebbano, Safe Schools Director; Laura Velez, Director of Services, Schenectady County Department of Social Services; Laura Zeligler, Executive Director, Law, Order, and Justice Center.

CGR would especially like to thank the following members of the Coordination Committee for their guidance in the planning process, knowledge and understanding of the issues facing youth in the City of Schenectady, and significant contributions to this report: Michael C. Eidens, JCEC Chair, Kathleen Rooney, Joseph Mancini, Pamela Derrick, and Laura Velez.

Finally, CGR would also like to thank all those who participated in the individual interviews and focus groups for their invaluable insights, commitment, and suggestions about how to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency in Schenectady.

Staff Team

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Context and Background

In 2005, the County and City of Schenectady put in place an effective coordinated planning effort to reduce violent juvenile crime within the City of Schenectady. To move this planning process forward, a Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition (JCEC) Advisory Board was developed and convened. The Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from family court, probation, social services, the youth bureau, education, behavioral health, community crime prevention efforts, the police department, elected officials, community based organizations and consumers. (A full list of the JCEC Advisory Board members and its chair is found in Appendix A). The Board assumed an active role throughout the planning process and met to articulate goals, review and analyze data, provide diverse stakeholder perspectives based on experiences and knowledge, and help shape the recommended directions. Lead responsibility for planning was provided by the Schenectady County Juvenile Justice Center. A coordinator and the services of the CGR (Center for Governmental Research Inc.) were secured to support this work and develop the plan.

Risk and Protective Factors

The planning process began with a review of the literature to better understand risk and protective factors. (A chart on Risk Factors for Youth Delinquency and Violence can be found in Appendix B.) The literature review highlighted important risk factors, i.e. conditions that increase the likelihood of delinquency, by age and domains including the individual, family, school, peer group and community, and identified protective factors that buffer or guard against the onset of delinquency. The use of risk and protective factors is an important way to understand what promotes both positive and negative behavioral outcomes and to design successful prevention programs for youth. This framework helped to inform the needs assessment and development of the goals and objectives.

The findings* on risk and protective factors indicate that:

1. Risk of juvenile delinquency and violence increases with the number of risk factors involved – the larger the number of risk factors an individual is exposed to, the greater the probability that individual will engage in delinquent behavior.
2. The impact of different risk factors varies with the development stage/age of individual.
3. Family management practices – discipline, parental involvement and attention, monitoring and supervision, conflict and neglect, etc. – consistently predict later delinquency and substance abuse.
4. There is a strong relationship between gang membership and delinquent behavior, particularly serious and violent delinquency. Delinquent or antisocial peers and siblings also have a clear impact, especially during adolescence.
5. School factors – such as low academic performance, commitment to school, and educational aspirations – are consistently linked with increased rates of juvenile delinquency and drug use.
6. Community matters: community disorganization, for example, is associated with an increased risk of violence in adolescence and early adulthood. Neighborhoods where there are high levels of poverty and crime increase the risk of involvement in serious crime for all children growing up there.
7. The impact of family variables appears to fade somewhat as adolescents become older and more independent of their parents.
8. For intervention and delinquency prevention programs, planners need to consider whether a given risk factor can be easily changed. Poor parenting/family management is more amenable to

* J. David Hawkins et al., “Predictors of Youth Violence,” OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin; Michael Shader, “Risk Factors for Delinquency: An Overview,” OJJDP Paper; Katherine Browning et al., “Highlights of Findings from the Rochester Youth Development Study,” OJJDP Fact Sheet.

direct change and targeted programs than, say, socioeconomic status.

Framework for Project

In developing the Implementation Plan, a framework for service provision was devised which took into account the ecological understanding that a young person will do better if he or she is raised in a strong and nurturing family, and if that strong family is embedded in a thriving community. The elements of the framework include:

- ❖ Engage and assist parents by providing intervention and family support services.
- ❖ Help youth succeed by supporting them early, providing services to build their skills and capacities, and fully supporting community involvement efforts.
- ❖ Support already troubled youth and target serious, violent and chronic juvenile delinquents with close supervision and increased community services.
- ❖ Increase collaboration among youth service providers including local government agencies, non-profit organizations, schools, and community organizations to make better use of existing resources and enhance the effectiveness of services.

Elements of the Plan

The implementation plan is organized into the following sections:

Section I: Introduction and Overview — provides background on the project, a review of key risk and protective factors influencing juvenile crime and delinquency, and the framework used to guide development of the Implementation Plan.

Section II: Needs Assessment — highlights important data and information on youth in the City and County of Schenectady as well as collaborative initiatives and other efforts currently underway to address juvenile violence and crime.

Section III: Stakeholder Perspectives — summarizes the results of individual interviews and focus groups discussions concerning key issues and priority areas in the City of Schenectady,

strengths to build upon, and ways to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency and better support children, youth and families.

Section IV: Recommended Directions — outlines four strategies to help reduce juvenile crime and delinquency, strengthen youth and families, and address community needs in the City of Schenectady.

SECTION II: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Demographic Trends

In 2000, the population of Schenectady County was 146,555, with approximately 42% of County residents living in the City of Schenectady. While the rest of the County's population increased by about 1,000 residents since 1990, the City lost nearly 6% of its inhabitants, resulting in a net population decline countywide. Recent Census estimates indicate that Schenectady County's population has risen slightly since 2000, but still has not equaled its 1990 population total. Figure 1 shows the change in total population between 1990 and 2000 for the entire County, the City of Schenectady, and the remainder of the County.

Figure 1. Change in Total Population: Schenectady County, Schenectady City, and Rest of County, 1990 -2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The decline in the City's total population has been mirrored by changes in its demographic make-up. African-American, Hispanic, and Asian populations all increased substantially from 1990 to 2000, with the Hispanic population alone more than doubling. By contrast, whites constituted approximately three-fourths of the City's total population in 2000, down from nearly 90 percent

ten years earlier (see Table 1 on p. 6). While 1990 and 2000 race data are not strictly comparable, the figures clearly point to significant changes in the City's demographic composition. These changes will need to be taken into account in developing effective, culturally sensitive prevention and intervention strategies for the City's increasingly diverse juvenile population.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the City of Schenectady

| | 1990 | Percent of Total Population 1990 | 2000 * | Percent of Total Population 2000 | Percent Change from 1990 to 2000 |
|---|--------|---|--------|---|---|
| Total Population | 65,566 | -- | 61,821 | -- | -5.7% |
| Race | | | | | |
| White | 58,093 | 88.6% | 47,460 | 76.8% | -18.3% |
| Black | 5,697 | 8.7% | 9,132 | 14.8% | 60.3% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,761 | 2.7% | 3,632 | 5.9% | 106.2% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 696 | 1.1% | 1,263 | 2.0% | 81.5% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 191 | 0.3% | 222 | 0.4% | 16.2% |

* Note: In 2000, Census respondents for the first time were able to select more than one race category. This change renders 1990 and 2000 Census data on race not directly comparable. In 2000, 3.6% of City of Schenectady residents selected multiple races.

Turning specifically to Schenectady's juvenile population, a number of demographic trends immediately stand out. While the overall population of both the County and City is aging, driven by significant out-migration among those ages 18-44, the total *juvenile* population has grown substantially over the past decade. This is especially true in the City of Schenectady. Tables 2 and 3 on p. 7 represent population change in four juvenile age brackets for Schenectady County and the City of Schenectady, respectively. The juvenile population increased in all age brackets from 1990 to 2000 (with the exception of those 5 and under, an outcome likely related to the sharp decline in residents ages 18-44). The City of Schenectady witnessed double-digit increases in the 5-9 and 10-14 age groups during this period, with a nearly 20% increase in children age 10-14 – those increasingly vulnerable to engaging in delinquent behavior. In addition, as Table 4 shows, this growing juvenile population is distributed unequally across the City, both in terms of the total number of children residing in each zip code and the percentage of those children in each age bracket. These population differences must be kept in mind when comparing data by zip code, particularly PINS and JD data.

Table 2: Juvenile Population by Age – Schenectady County

| Age | 1990 Census | 2000 Census | % Change | 2003 Estimate |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| <5 years | 10,440 | 9,001 | -13.8% | 8,494 |
| 5 to 9 years | 9,522 | 10,333 | 8.5% | 9,148 |
| 10 to 14 years | 8,897 | 10,483 | 17.8% | 10,333 |
| 15 to 19 years | 9,408 | 9,422 | 0.1% | 9,941 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3: Juvenile Population by Age – City of Schenectady

| Age | 1990 | 2000 | % Change |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <5 years | 5,186 | 4,358 | -16.0% |
| 5 to 9 years | 3,945 | 4,476 | 13.5% |
| 10 to 14 years | 3,409 | 4,057 | 19.0% |
| 15 to 19 years | 4,135 | 4,219 | 2.0% |
| 5-19 years | 11,489 | 12,752 | 11.0% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 4: Juvenile Population by Age and Zip Code – City of Schenectady

| Zip Codes | 12303 | 12304 | 12305 | 12306 | 12307 | 12308 |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Age: | | | | | | |
| <5 years | 1,678 | 1,497 | 77 | 1,561 | 711 | 940 |
| 5 - 9 years | 2,079 | 1,759 | 82 | 1,708 | 807 | 927 |
| 10 - 14 years | 2,111 | 1,448 | 111 | 1,686 | 727 | 1,082 |
| 15 - 19 years | 1,683 | 1,167 | 974 | 1,162 | 400 | 769 |
| Total | 7,551 | 5,871 | 1,244 | 6,117 | 2,645 | 3,718 |

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing- SF3

Risk and Protective Factors: City of Schenectady

The concept of risk and protective factors, as discussed in the Introduction & Overview, provides a useful framework for understanding what promotes and guards against delinquent behavior in juveniles and for helping to design successful programs for young people. The tables and charts in this section, drawn from a variety of data sources, highlight key risk and protective factors in the City of Schenectady.

The data in Table 5 below is taken from the *Communities That Care (CTC) Youth Survey* administered to 495 students (grades 7 & 8) in the Schenectady City School District in February 2002. The *CTC Youth Survey* was developed to measure the prevalence and frequency of drug use and antisocial behaviors among adolescents, as well as the existence and strength of a variety of risk and

protective factors that can predict and guard against these behaviors. The factors presented in Table 5 were selected from the complete set of factors included in the Schenectady survey. A student's risk or protective factor scale score is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 100 (for each factor a score of 50 is equivalent to the national average). Because risk and protective factors are sensitive to demographic variables, a comparison sample was drawn from data on students participating in the CTC Six-State Study who match City of Schenectady students in terms of age, sex, and ethnicity. The resulting matched comparison scores offer the most meaningful benchmark for evaluating the City's risk and protective factor profile. Because risk is associated with negative behavioral outcomes, lower risk factor scale scores are preferable. Conversely, since protective factors are associated with positive outcomes, high protective factor scores are better.

Table 5: 2002 CTC Youth Survey Scale Scores – City of Schenectady

| | Schenectady City School District | CTC Matched Comparison |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Risk Factors (Lower Score is Better)</i> | | |
| Community Domain | | |
| Community Disorganization | 70 | 53 |
| Low Neighborhood Attachment | 59 | 51 |
| Perceived Availability of Drugs/Firearms | 34 | 47 |
| Family Domain | | |
| Parental Attitudes toward Antisocial Behavior | 53 | 49 |
| Poor Family Supervision | 50 | 46 |
| Peer and Individual Domains | | |
| Friends' Delinquent Behavior | 63 | 53 |
| Gang Involvement | 58 | 50 |
| Attitudes toward Antisocial Behavior | 55 | 52 |
| Friends' Use of Drugs | 45 | 48 |
| <i>Protective Factors (Higher Score is Better)</i> | | |
| Community Domain | | |
| Rewards for Prosocial Involvement | 41 | 50 |
| Family Domain | | |
| Rewards for Prosocial Involvement | 50 | 54 |
| Family Attachment | 45 | 52 |
| School Domain | | |
| Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement | 54 | 48 |
| Peer and Individual Domains | | |
| Social Skills | 50 | 49 |

As Table 5 indicates, many of the risk factor scores are above the relevant national average and matched comparison scores, indicating a relatively high level of vulnerability for City of Schenectady students in these areas. Several risk factor scores in particular are a cause for concern, including friends' delinquent behavior, gang involvement, and low neighborhood attachment. And the score for community disorganization, which reflects students' perceptions about neighborhood disarray (e.g. abandoned buildings, fighting, drug selling) and personal safety, is notably higher than both the national average and matched comparison score. The two positive exceptions are perceived availability of drugs/firearms and friends' use of drugs, where the risk level for City of Schenectady students is comparatively low. On the other hand, with the exception of school opportunities for prosocial involvement, protective factor scores for City students were at or below the national and/or matched comparison averages (see Appendix D for a complete list of risk and protective factor scale scores for City of Schenectady students from the 2002 CTC Survey).

School Commitment and Success

In general the findings from the CTC Youth Survey are echoed in data on another important factor associated with delinquent behavior, especially among adolescents – the level of school commitment and success. Table 6 on page 10 presents data for the City of Schenectady on a variety of school related indices ranging from the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunches to those scoring below the New York State English Language Assessment (ELA) testing standard. The data was compiled in 2005 as part of the Schenectady Safe Schools Healthy Students Collaboration. As the table indicates, approximately three-fourths of City of Schenectady elementary and middle school students are receiving free lunches, and a substantial number are scoring below the NYS ELA standard (Level 3) for their grade level (55% for 4th grade and nearly 75% for 8th grade). Although attendance rates are fairly high, student discipline appears to be a significant issue, with over 25% of middle school students and 30% of high school students having been suspended at least once during the school year. School suspensions provide an important indicator of high-risk youth – and are a contributing factor for entry into the juvenile justice system.

Table 6: Schenectady Safe Schools Healthy Students Collaboration--2005

| Indicators | Elementary | Middle School | High School |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Number of Schools | 11 | 3 | 1+ Career Ctr. |
| Student Population | 4,604 (Pre K -5) | 2,344 (6-8) | 2,476 (9-12) |
| Demographic Profile | 31.5% Black 13.8% Hispanic 12.7% Asian 46.2% White | 33.1% Black 11.9% Hisp. 6% Asian 49.1% White | 29.5% Black 10% Hisp. 8.3% Asian 52.3% White |
| Free &Reduced Lunch | 78.6% | 70.3% | 49.7%* |
| Attendance | 93.0% | 92.5% | 88.3% |
| Discipline Incidents | 7,802 | 8,752 | 8,188 |
| Suspension | 12.1% | 25.4% | 30% |
| Students below NYS | 55% | 74% | N/A |
| ELA Standard (Level 3) | (4 th Grade) | (8 th Grade) | |
| HS Non-Completers | N/A | N/A | 9.5% |

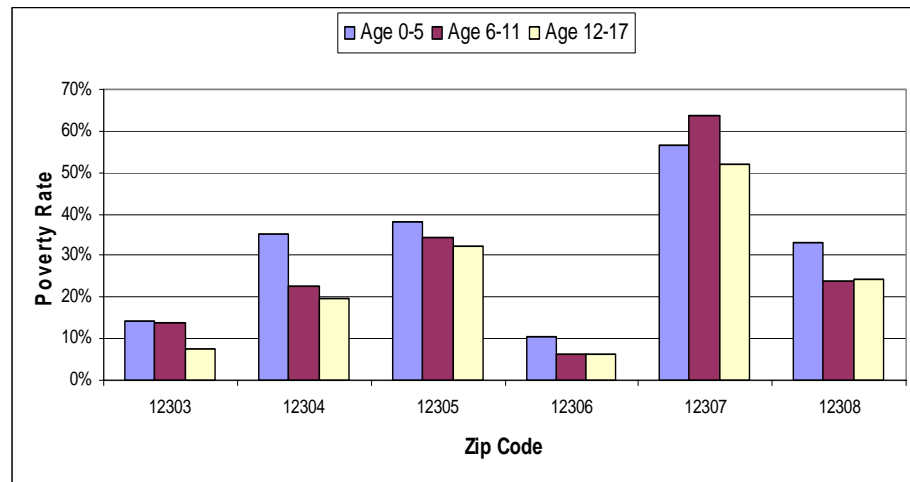
* Under-reported (HS Students Elect Not to Participate)

Poverty

Socioeconomic status is one of the primary family and community risk factors associated with delinquent behavior, poor school performance, and increased drug and alcohol use, especially among younger children. Existing research points to a powerful connection between being raised in a disadvantaged environment and participation in delinquent acts; “living in a neighborhood where there are high levels of poverty and crime increases the risk of involvement in serious crime for all children growing up there” (cited in Shader, p. 7). Poverty is a standard measure of socioeconomic deprivation. Figure 2 on p. 11 charts 2000 poverty rates by zip code for the City of Schenectady. In that year, the federal poverty rate was defined as an income of \$19,000 or less a year for a family of four. It should be noted that since the federal poverty rate is a national standard, and poverty figures currently are not adjusted for cost of living differentials between states and regions, actual poverty rates in states like New York may be somewhat higher than the official totals.

Figure 2: City of Schenectady – 2000 Poverty Rates by Age and Zip Code

(Children in Households below Federal Poverty Line)



Poverty is clearly a major concern in the City of Schenectady. In three zip codes (12304, 12305, 12308), at least 20 percent of children in all age brackets live in poverty, and between 30-40 percent of children ages 0-5 in these zip codes reside in households with incomes below the poverty line. The problem is particularly acute in zip code 12307, where more than *half* of all children live in poverty. Perhaps most worrisome, the poverty rate for those ages 6-11 (for whom poverty is one of the primary risk factors for delinquency) exceeds 60 percent.

Family Conflict

As highlighted in the review of risk and protective factors, family conflict is another significant predictor of delinquency and violence among juveniles. One measure of such conflict is reports of abuse or neglect made to child protective agencies. Table 7 below depicts the total number of Child Protective Service reports filed in the City of Schenectady during 2004.

Table 7: 2004 Child Protective Service (CPS) Reports in the City of Schenectady – by Subject Zip Code

| Subject Zip Code | Total Number of Reports by Zip Code | Reports as Percentage of Juvenile Population in Zip Code (Ages 0-19) | Approximate Percentage of Zip Code in City |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| 12303 | 364 | 4.8% | 25% |
| 12304 | 335 | 5.7% | 100% |
| 12305 | 92 | 7.4% | 100% |
| 12306 | 223 | 3.6% | 15% |
| 12307 | 386 | 14.6% | 100% |
| 12308 | 327 | 8.8% | 98% |
| Total | 1,727 | 6.4% | |

A substantial number of reports were filed in each zip code with a large adult population. The incidence of reports was greatest in zip code 12307, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the juvenile population. In fact, the rate of reports in that area was nearly 15 percent, well above the next highest percentage and the overall average for these zip codes.

Substance Abuse

The use, and abuse, of alcohol and drugs by young children and adolescents remains a key concern of the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition and other juvenile-oriented agencies and programs in the City. It is also a prime risk factor associated with delinquent behavior, especially among children ages 6-11. Table 8 on page 13 presents data on alcohol and drug use by 7th and 8th grade students in the City of Schenectady. The data is drawn from the same 2002 *Communities That Care Youth Survey* previously discussed on pages 6-7.

**Table 8: Juvenile Alcohol and Drug Use in the City of Schenectady
2002 Communities that Care Youth Survey
(Survey of Grades 7 and 8)**

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Student Profile: | Male.....48.8% | White.....41.9% | Indian.....1.9% |
| | Female.....49.5% | Black.....20.3% | Asian.....1.3% |
| | | Latino.....9.0% | |

Alcohol and Other Drugs: Lifetime Use (Percentage reporting any use)

| | 7 th | 8 th |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ===== | | |
| Alcohol | 43.6 | 59.2 |
| Cigarettes | 35.9 | 40.4 |
| Marijuana | 16.9 | 25.9 |

Alcohol and Other Drugs: Use in the Last 30 Days (Percentage reporting use)

| | 7 th | 8 th |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ===== | | |
| Alcohol | 16.7 | 23.2 |
| Cigarettes | 12.1 | 13.0 |
| Marijuana | 7.7 | 13.8 |

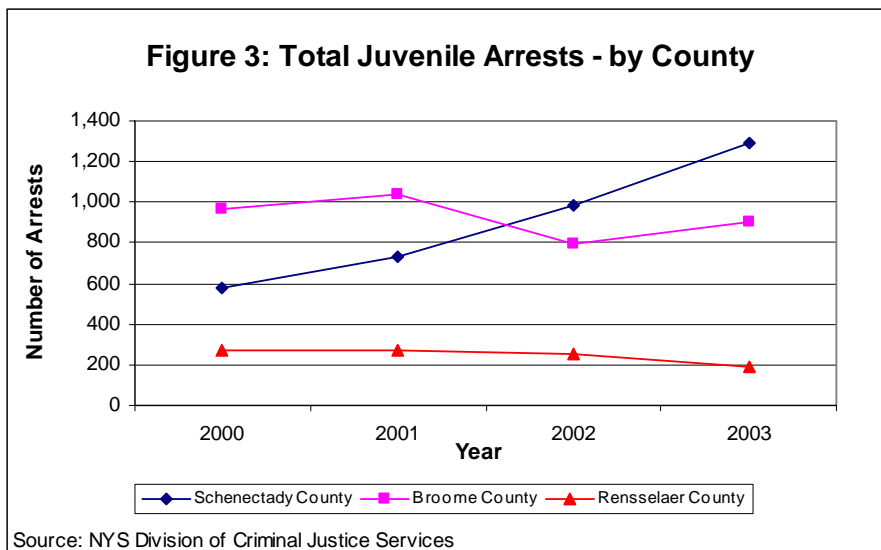
As the table shows, a large percentage of 7th and 8th graders in the City of Schenectady have a history of alcohol and drug use. Approximately 25 percent of 8th graders, for example, reported having tried marijuana, and almost 60 percent reported having used alcohol. “Compared to national findings, 8th graders in this school district reported a higher rate of lifetime alcohol use” (p.16).^{*} Cigarette use is also fairly common. Equally troubling, significant percentages of students indicated taking these substances within 30 days of the survey, suggesting recent and perhaps regular use of drugs and alcohol.

^{*} The City of Schenectady Youth Survey Report (2002).

Youth at Risk and Within the Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile Arrest and Adjudication Data

We turn now to those children who have had contact with or entered the juvenile justice system. Arrests, of course, represent a key contact point with the law enforcement community. Figure 3



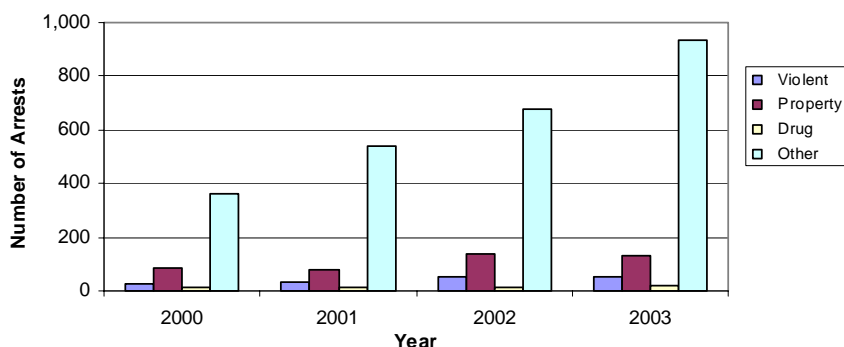
at left depicts juvenile arrest trend data for selected counties between 2000 and 2003. The overall and comparative results are striking. Total juvenile arrests more than doubled in Schenectady County over this four-year period, from roughly 600 in 2000 to nearly 1,300 in 2003, with the City of Schenectady accounting for 85-90 percent of these yearly

totals. This steep upward trend contrasts sharply with the results for two comparable upstate counties, Broome and Rensselaer, where such arrests declined slightly since 2000. In evaluating these changes, it should be noted that Schenectady has the smallest juvenile population (ages 5-17) of the three counties.¹ In effect, Schenectady County now has both the fewest juveniles and the most juvenile arrests of these counties – with the number of arrests continuing to rise.

When looking specifically at the categories of juvenile crimes committed in the City of Schenectady (Figure 4), several patterns emerge. Drug arrests remained fairly constant over this period, while property (burglary, larceny, theft) and violent (murder, rape, robbery, armed assault) crimes rose by 54 and 79 percent, respectively. The biggest increase in arrests was in the “Other” category, which encompasses a wide variety of less serious crimes

¹ Rounded 2000 Census juvenile population figures for the three counties are: Schenectady (26,600); Rensselaer (27,700); and Broome (34,800).

Figure 4: City of Schenectady - Juvenile Arrests by Category

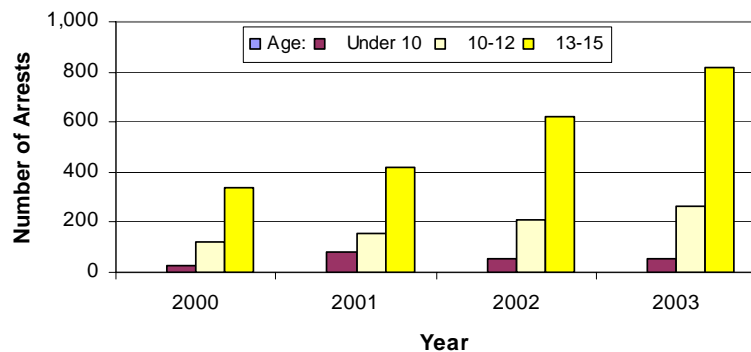


Source: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

ranging from criminal mischief and family offenses to disorderly conduct and simple assault. Arrests in this category rose consistently and substantially over this period, jumping by nearly 160 percent since 2000. The total number of juvenile arrests in the City jumped from 488 in 2000 to 1,136 in 2003, an increase of 133 percent.

Breaking down juvenile arrests by age group (Figure 5), it is clear that the overall increase in arrests was driven by those 13-15 years of age. However, arrests among 10-12 year olds also rose steadily

Figure 5: City of Schenectady - Juvenile Arrests by Age



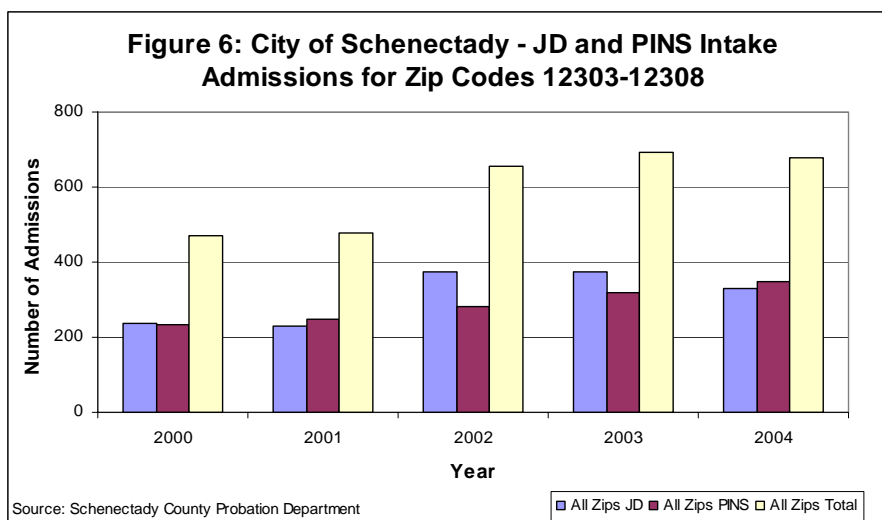
Source: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

over this period, if not quite as dramatically, suggesting that delinquent behavior may be becoming more commonplace among pre-teens. Arrests for those under 10 increased sharply in 2001 before declining and leveling off. Although it is impossible to determine from this data whether the spike in juvenile arrests was driven by an upsurge in delinquent behavior,

stepped up police activity (surveillance, patrols, sweeps, etc.), a combination of these factors, or some other cause, there is no question that contact (and incidents) between law enforcement officials and juveniles increased dramatically over this four-year period. It is also true that this growth in juvenile arrests significantly expands the pool of adolescents who are potential entrants into the juvenile justice system.

Probation Intake Admission Trends

A growing number of adolescents in the City of Schenectady *have* had contact with the juvenile justice system in recent years. Data on probation intake admissions reflects the number of children who have entered the juvenile justice system to receive case screening and assessment. As figure 6 below indicates, PINS and JD intake admissions went up considerably beginning in 2002. There were particularly large admissions increases in zip codes 12303, 12306, and 12308 (see Appendix E for charts detailing intake admissions by zip code).

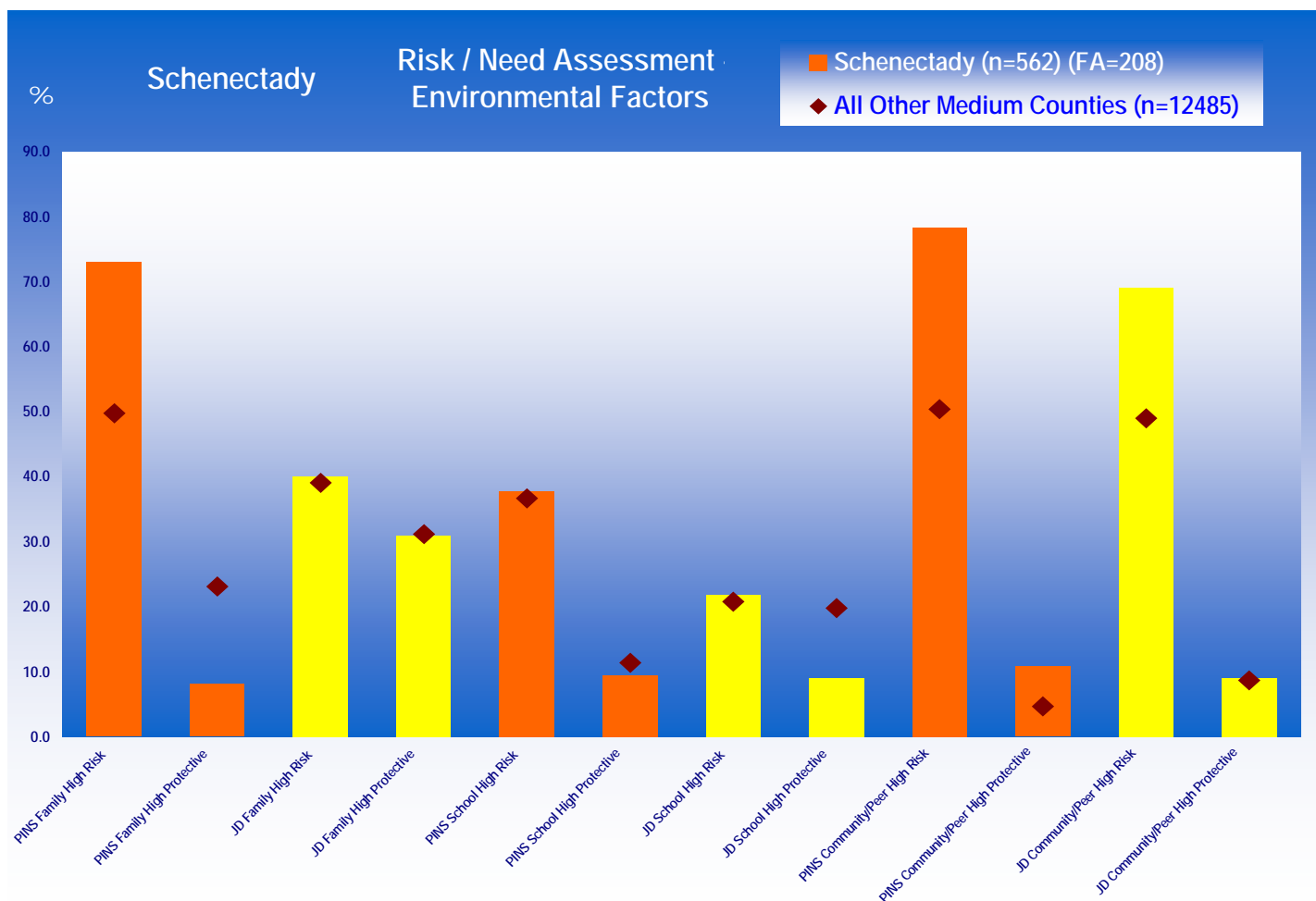


YASI Profiles – Risk and Need Assessment

Every individual entering the juvenile justice system in Schenectady County is now evaluated using the Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI). YASI is a systematic set of case evaluation and planning tools for use with PINS and JD cases at intake, investigation and supervision. It provides a framework to incorporate the research findings on risk and protective factors into juvenile planning practices to positively impact youth behavior through effective interventions and service provision. YASI tools are currently being used in 48 jurisdictions throughout New York and have been shown to be particularly effective in drafting pre-dispositional reports for Family Court. YASI data is categorized in a variety of risk and protective factor domains, including many of those already discussed in this needs assessment. The following two charts are drawn from 2004 YASI survey data for juveniles in Schenectady County. Data is presented for both PINS and JD respondents on selected risk and

protective factors in two overarching categories: individual and environmental. For each factor, the percentage for Schenectady County participants and a comparison percentage for participants in all other medium sized counties in NYS are provided. The results thus complement and can be compared to the data from the *Communities That Care* survey presented on pp. 6-7.

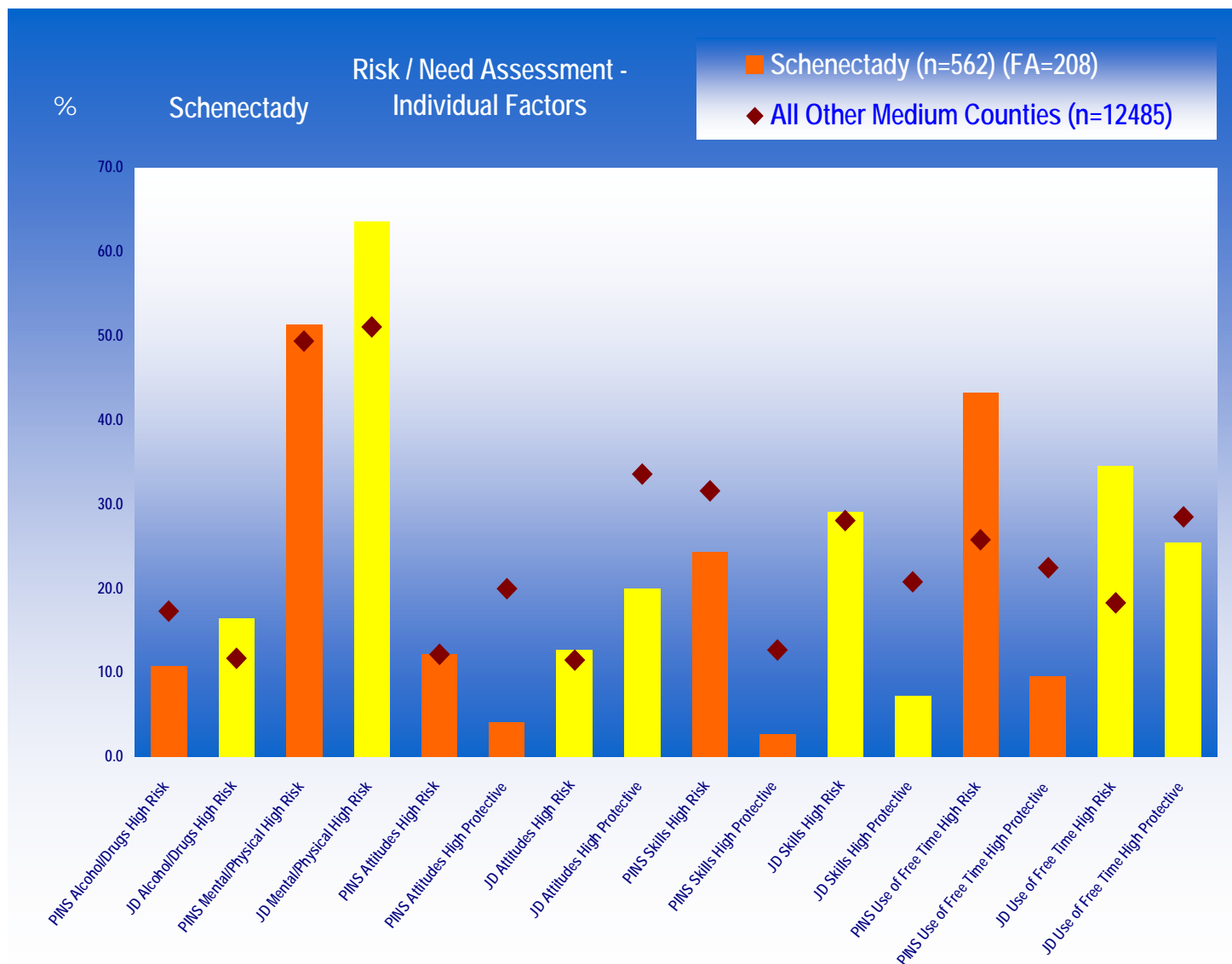
Figure 7: Schenectady County – 2004 YASI Results for PINS and JDs (Environmental Risk and Protective Factors)



As Figure 7 indicates, the percentage of both PINS and JDs in Schenectady County evaluated as high risk in the community/peer category is quite high, a finding which echoes the results in the related domains from the 2002 CTC Survey. These percentages are also considerably higher than average for other similarly sized counties in the State. In addition, Schenectady County had a higher than average percentage of PINS cases ranked as high risk

in the family domain – and a correspondingly lower than average high protective ranking score in this domain (JDs, by contrast, were at the state average for both risk and protective factors in the family category). Figure 8 below presents individual risk and protective factor percentages for the County.

**Figure 8: Schenectady County – 2004 YASI Results for PINS and JDs
(Individual Risk and Protective Factors)**



A number of conclusions can be drawn from this graph. First, there is no clear pattern with regard to the high-risk categories. While substantially higher than average percentages of both PINS

and JDs scored high risk in the “use of free time” category, and approximately two-thirds of JD cases were evaluated as high risk in the mental/physical health domain, PINS respondents in Schenectady County had lower than average high risk scores in two domains: alcohol/drugs and individual skills. When it comes to high *protective* factor rankings, however, the results are more consistent and troubling. Both PINS and JD respondents had percentages lower than the statewide averages for medium sized counties – and often substantially lower than the statewide averages – in *all* the categories for which high protective factor data is presented.

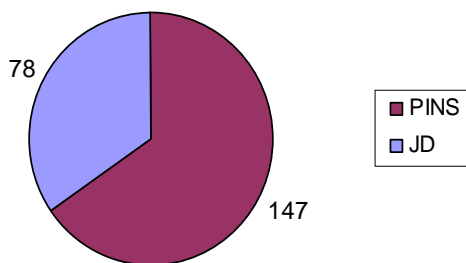
In sum, many children in the County juvenile justice system do not have the kind of individual and family resources that might help guard against or offset the high risk factors and difficult environments they face, particularly when compared to similarly situated juveniles across the state. Put another way, considerable need (and opportunity) exists for intervention to enhance the protective factor profile of high-risk juveniles in the County and City of Schenectady.

Youth in the System – Active Intake Cases

The final set of figures in this section provide context on those youth in the City of Schenectady who are currently in the juvenile justice system. The charts that follow present a snapshot of May 2005 juvenile intake cases in the City. Approximately two-thirds of these active juvenile cases have a PINS designation (Figure 9).

The majority of the 225 juveniles in the system are male, but a significant, and growing, number are female. Girls currently make up over 40% of the active juvenile intake cases in the City of

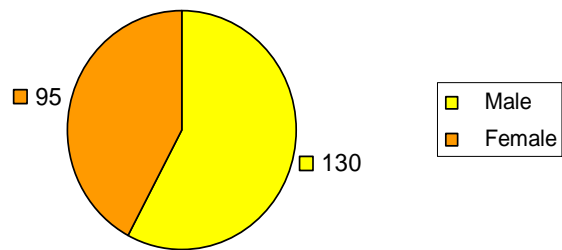
Figure 9: City of Schenectady - Juvenile Intake Cases by Status (May 2005)



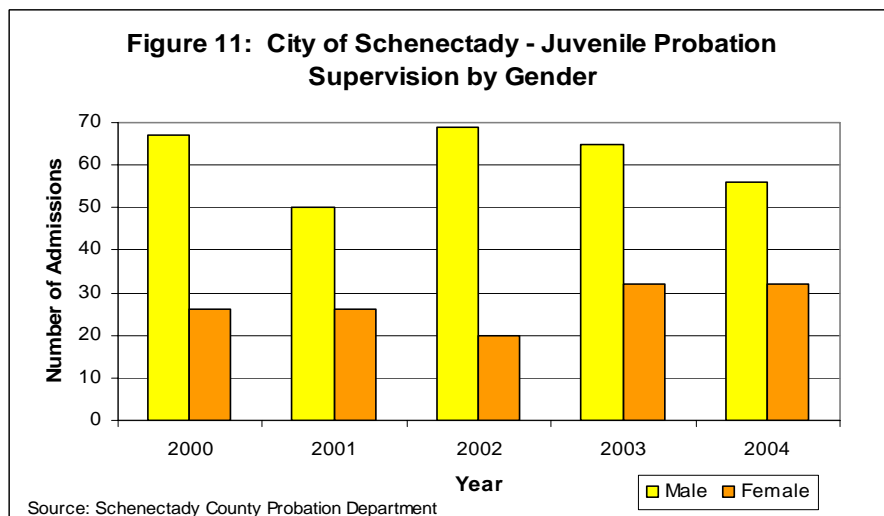
Source: Schenectady County Probation Department

Schenectady
(Figure 10).

Figure 10: City of Schenectady - Juvenile Intake Cases by Gender (May 2005)



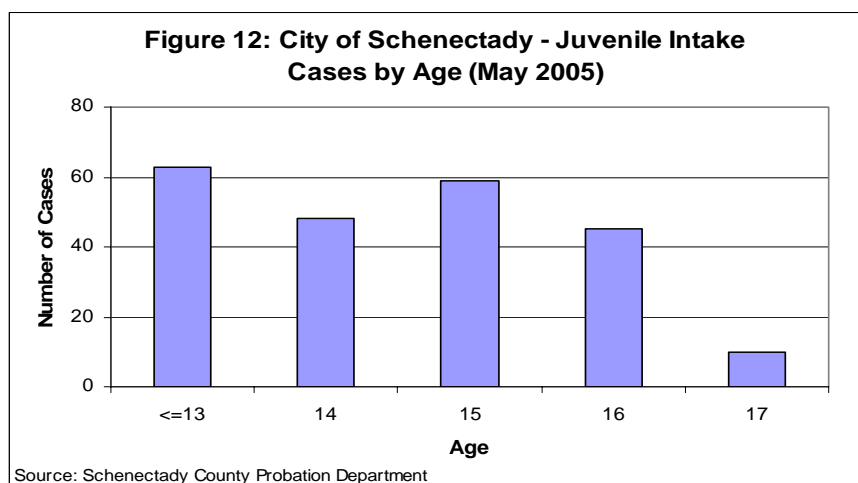
Source: Schenectady County Probation Department



This total is consistent with the tripling of female juvenile arrests from 2000-2003 (i.e. those at one key entry point into the juvenile justice system), as well as the increasing number and percentage of girls who are under probation supervision (those who have not been successfully adjusted or diverted from

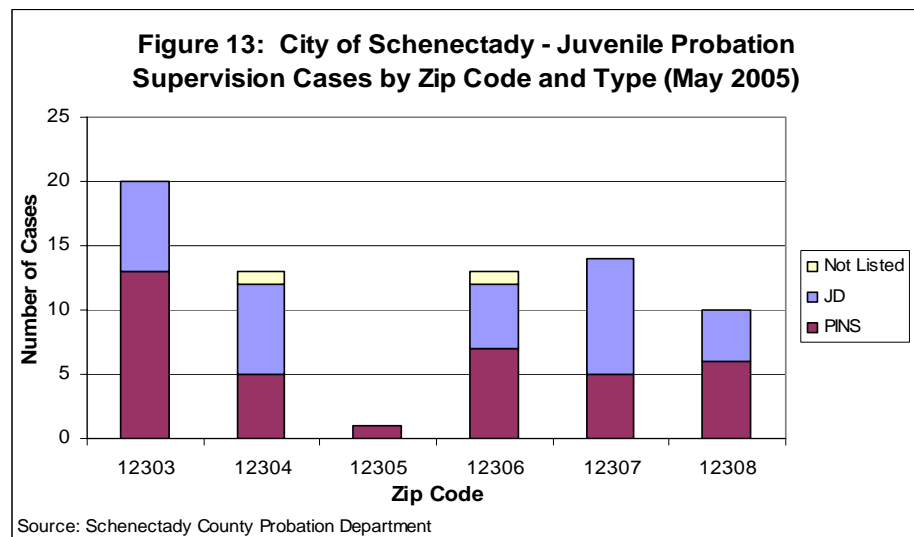
family court proceedings). As Figure 11 shows, since 2002 the number of male juveniles under probation supervision has fallen while the number of female juveniles under supervision has risen. Girls made up 36 percent of all juveniles under supervision by 2004, compared to 27 percent four years earlier.

Our review of current intake patterns concludes with a look at active juvenile intake cases by age in the City of Schenectady. Figure 12 indicates that there are a substantial number of cases (40 or more) in each age group, with the natural exception of age 17. Perhaps most sobering is the fact that a sizeable number of young children are currently in the juvenile justice system; over 60 cases



are age 13 or younger, the largest total for any age group (it is worth noting here, however, that this is the only age group that includes children of more than one age, thereby increasing the intake total).

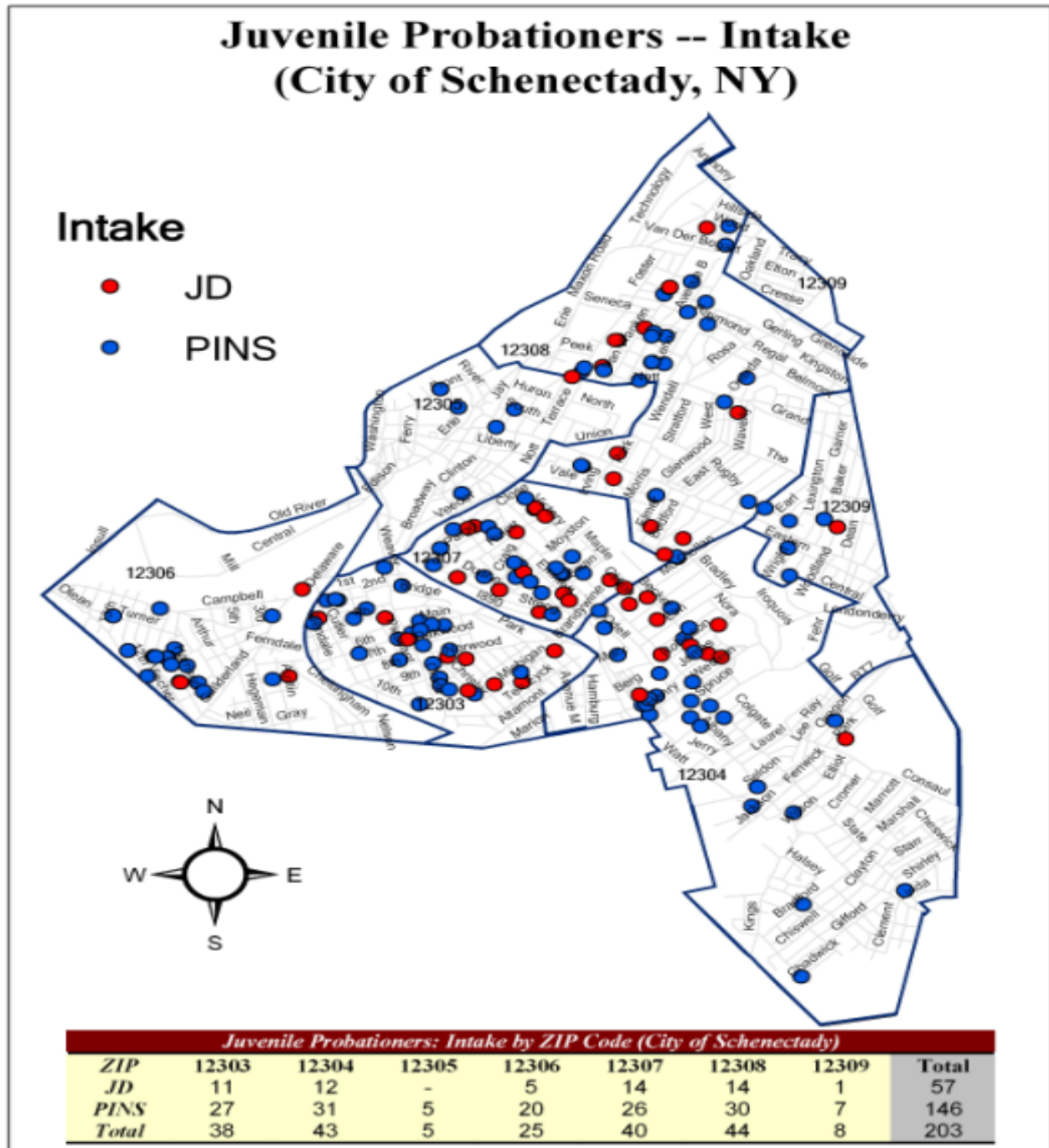
Finally, Figure 13 below presents active juvenile probation supervision cases by zip code in the City of Schenectady. There is a widespread dispersion of PINS and JD cases across the City. Zip code 12303 has the highest number of total cases, but it also has the largest juvenile population of any zip in the City. Zip code 12307 has both the largest number of probation supervision cases as a percentage of its juvenile population and the highest proportion of JD to PINS cases. Zip code 12304 is the other locale that currently has more JD than PINS cases (see Appendix E for probation supervision trend data).



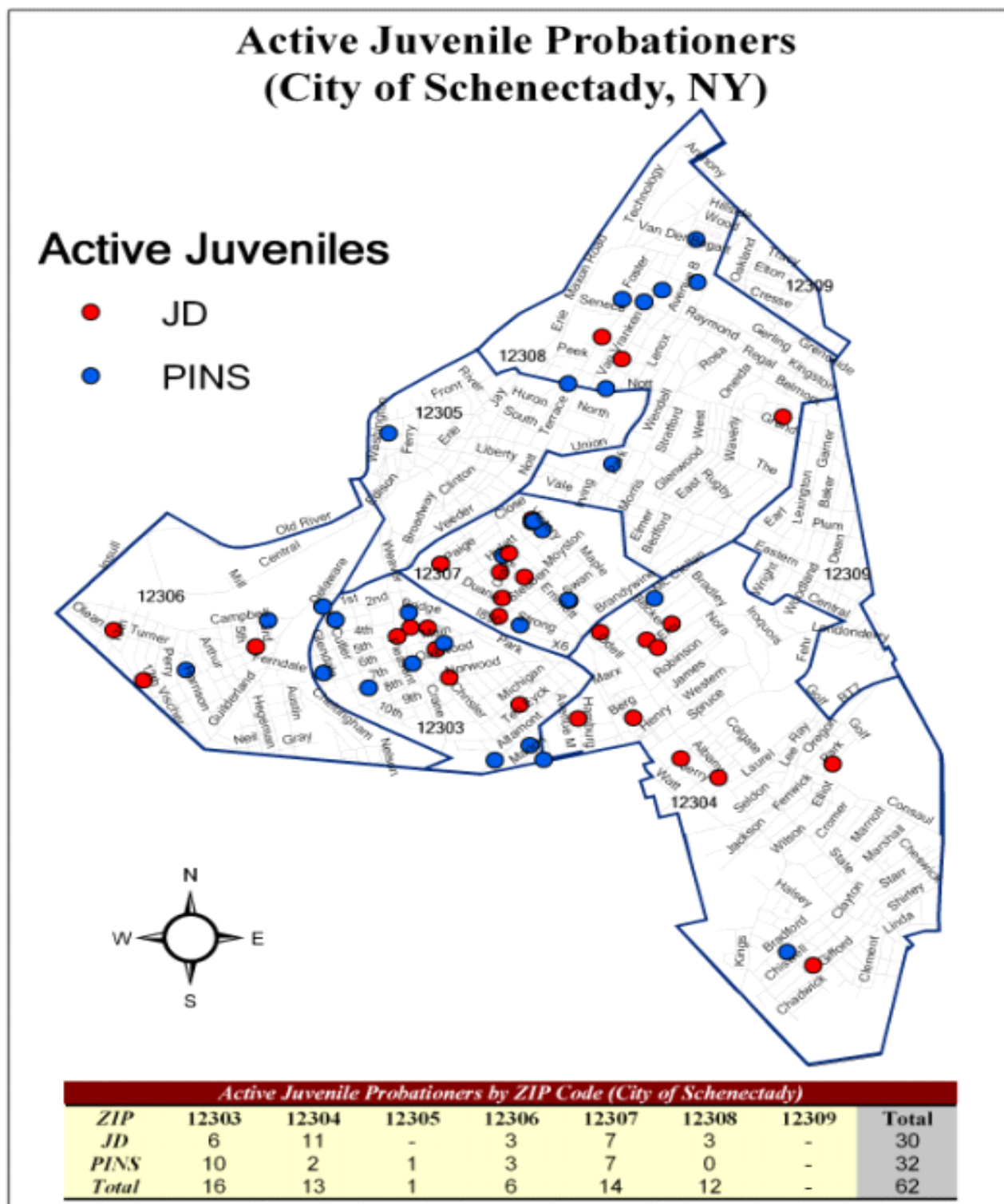
Probation Mapping

The concept of crime mapping is new to the Schenectady County Probation Department. Its use has expanded in the field of law enforcement by crime analysts interested in visualizing crime data through the medium of maps. Locally, mapping has been used with Operation Impact to identify areas in the City of Schenectady that have a high incidence of criminal activity as well as those sections in the City that are the most populated with individuals involved in the criminal justice/juvenile justice system. The first two maps below were generated by the Probation Department to pinpoint the neighborhoods and streets that juvenile PINS and JDs reside in. The third map plots adult probationers by street and zone. Taken together these maps allow readers to see the degree of overlap between juvenile and adult probationers in the City of Schenectady, and thus gain further perspective on the family and community risk dynamics that juveniles are exposed to.

Map 1: Juvenile Intake Cases by Street and Zip Code (May 2005)

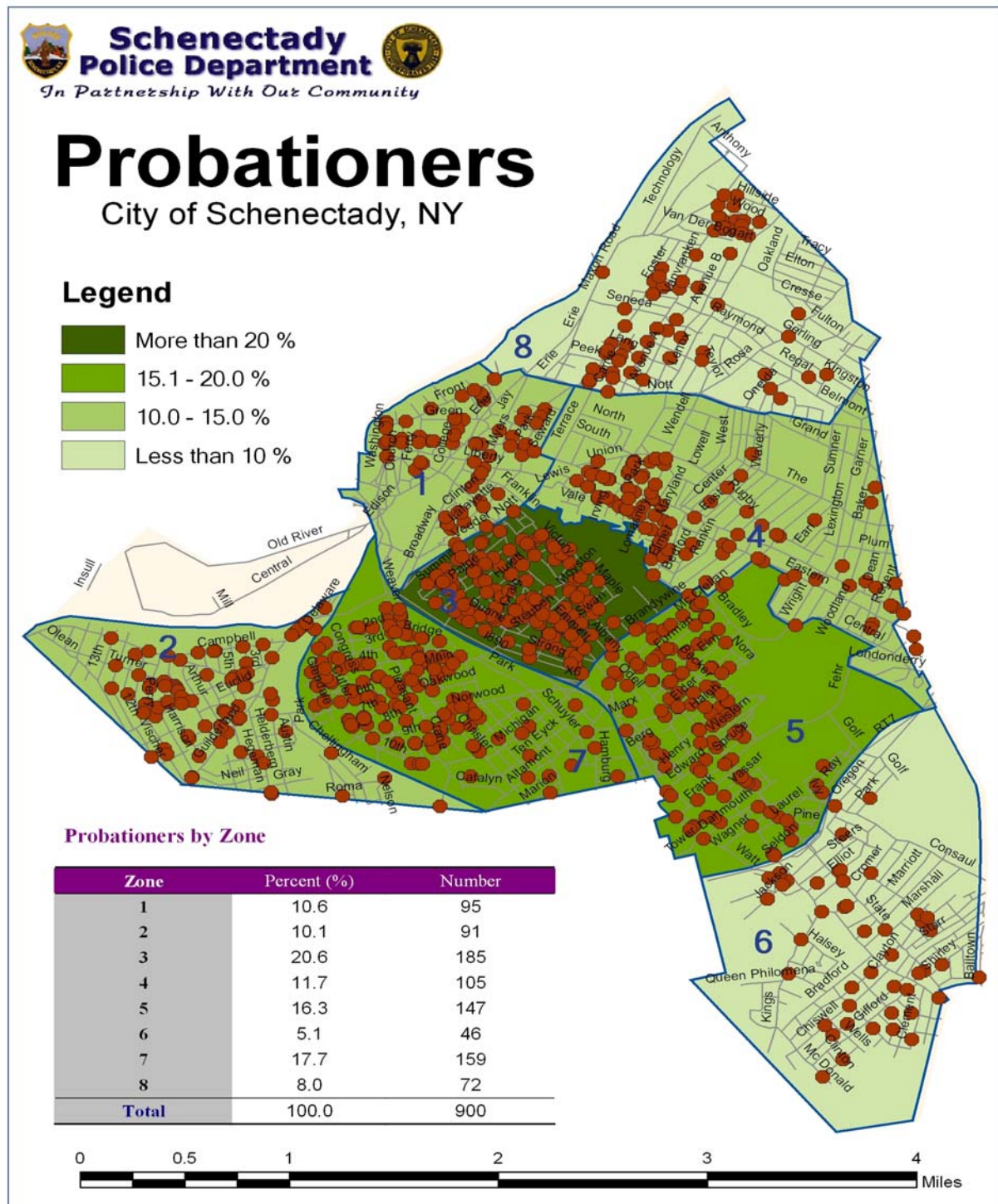


Map 2: Juvenile Probation Supervision Cases by Street and Zip Code (May 2005)



For Map 1, most notable is the clustering of active probation intake clients in the 12303 and 12307 sectors of the city of Schenectady, in the areas of Pleasant Street, Oakwood and Crane Streets and Craig, Duane and Emmett Streets, and in the northwestern portion of the 12304 zip code, around Albany, James, and Becker Streets. Additional groupings can be located north and east of Guilderland Avenue, on 12th, Vischer and Harrison Streets, as well as near Western, Lenox and Avenue B. A review of map 2 highlights the significant reduction in the number of juveniles referred to Probation Intake who ultimately receive family court adjudication and probation supervision. Approximately half of these 62 clients (or 31% of active juvenile intake cases) live in the 12303 and 12307 zip codes, with a significant number of JD probationers also residing in the 12304 zip code.

Map 3: Adult Probationers Cases by Street and Zone (May 2005)



Perhaps most remarkable about Map 3 is the striking degree of overlap between the location of adult probationers and juvenile

intake cases and probationers, a finding which underscores the impact of family and community risk factors on the PINS/JD population – and spotlights those neighborhoods in the City that are most greatly in need of targeted prevention and intervention programs for at-risk youth and their families.

Probation Case Flow Trends

While the data and narrative above provides compelling evidence of the significant challenges and problems confronting at-risk juveniles in the City of Schenectady, the picture for these youth is not entirely bleak. One key source of optimism is the definite success of the Schenectady County juvenile justice system in diverting PINS and JDs from Family Court adjudication and in providing effective adjustment services. Table 9 on p. 27 presents Schenectady County Probation juvenile case flow data from 1999 to 2003. The number of PINS and JD complaints increased from 732 to 834 over this period, in keeping with the rise in juvenile arrests and other evidence of a growing at-risk juvenile population in Schenectady. And the number of complaints continues to rise. During the 2004 calendar year, a total of 901 complaints were filed at Intake at the Juvenile Justice Center. While dispositional information for that year is not yet available, this frequency shows an 8% increase over the previous year's total of complaints brought to the Center for intake and adjustment services.

Yet even as the number of PINS/JD complaints has climbed, so has the rate of adjustment of these cases. The proportion of complaints successfully adjusted or diverted from Family Court proceedings rose from 76 percent in 1999 to almost 90 percent four years later. At the same time, the percentage of complaints resulting in adjudications was cut in half, dropping from nearly one-quarter in 1999 to 12 percent in 2003.² This reality highlights the value of the Juvenile Justice Center and its array of services related to intake adjustment. The greater the effectiveness of its services, the smaller the percentage of cases that will be submitted for petition to Family Court, as evidenced by this data. But as complaints brought to the Center continue to rise, so does the workload related to intake assessment and adjustment. In short, although facing a growing workload, the Center is becoming even

² It should be noted that since not all complaints brought in a given calendar year are adjusted that year, the figures presented are effectively “rolling” numbers and percentages and should be interpreted accordingly.

more adept at keeping at-risk youth out of Family Court – and all the potentially disruptive consequences of that process.

Table 9: Schenectady County Probation Juvenile Case Flow*

| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Number of Complaints | | | | | |
| JD'S | 351 | 308 | 295 | 450 | 452 |
| PINS | 381 | 300 | 330 | 369 | 382 |
| Total | 732 | 608 | 625 | 819 | 834 |
| Adjusted at Intake** | | | | | |
| Total | 557 | 513 | 514 | 714 | 736 |
| % of Complaints | 76% | 84% | 82% | 87% | 88% |
| Number Adjudicated** | | | | | |
| Total | 175 | 95 | 111 | 105 | 98 |
| % of Complaints | 24% | 16% | 18% | 13% | 12% |
| Number of Placements | | | | | |
| JD'S | 21 | 18 | 15 | 16 | 16 |
| PINS | 40 | 27 | 15 | 31 | 17 |
| Total | 61 | 45 | 30 | 47 | 33 |
| % of Complaints | 8% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 4% |
| Supervision | | | | | |
| Average Monthly | | | | | |
| JD'S | 40 | 39 | 17 | 17 | 19 |
| PINS | 71 | 75 | 41 | 57 | 58 |
| Total | 111 | 114 | 58 | 74 | 77 |

*Source: Schenectady County Probation/Juvenile Justice Center. "Probation Workload Data," 1999-2003.

** This number represents a total of JD and PINS cases combined.

The assessment remains generally positive when we turn to the figures related to Family Court processing. As a result of the growing effectiveness of PINS/JD adjustment and diversion services, there has been a significant reduction in the number of Family Court clients since 1999. It appears from the data that the majority of these cases continue to result in a disposition of probation supervision. While the aggregate information does not tag individual cases that move through the system, summary figures show that in the five-year period presented, average monthly supervision caseloads ranged from a high of 114 cases in

2000 to a low of 74 in 2002, with an average reported caseload of 77 in 2003. However, as the table also indicates, a small (and declining) share of Family Court cases result in out-of-home placements. In fact, the percentage of PINS/JD complaints ultimately requiring some form of placement was cut in half over this period, dropping to only 4% in 2003.

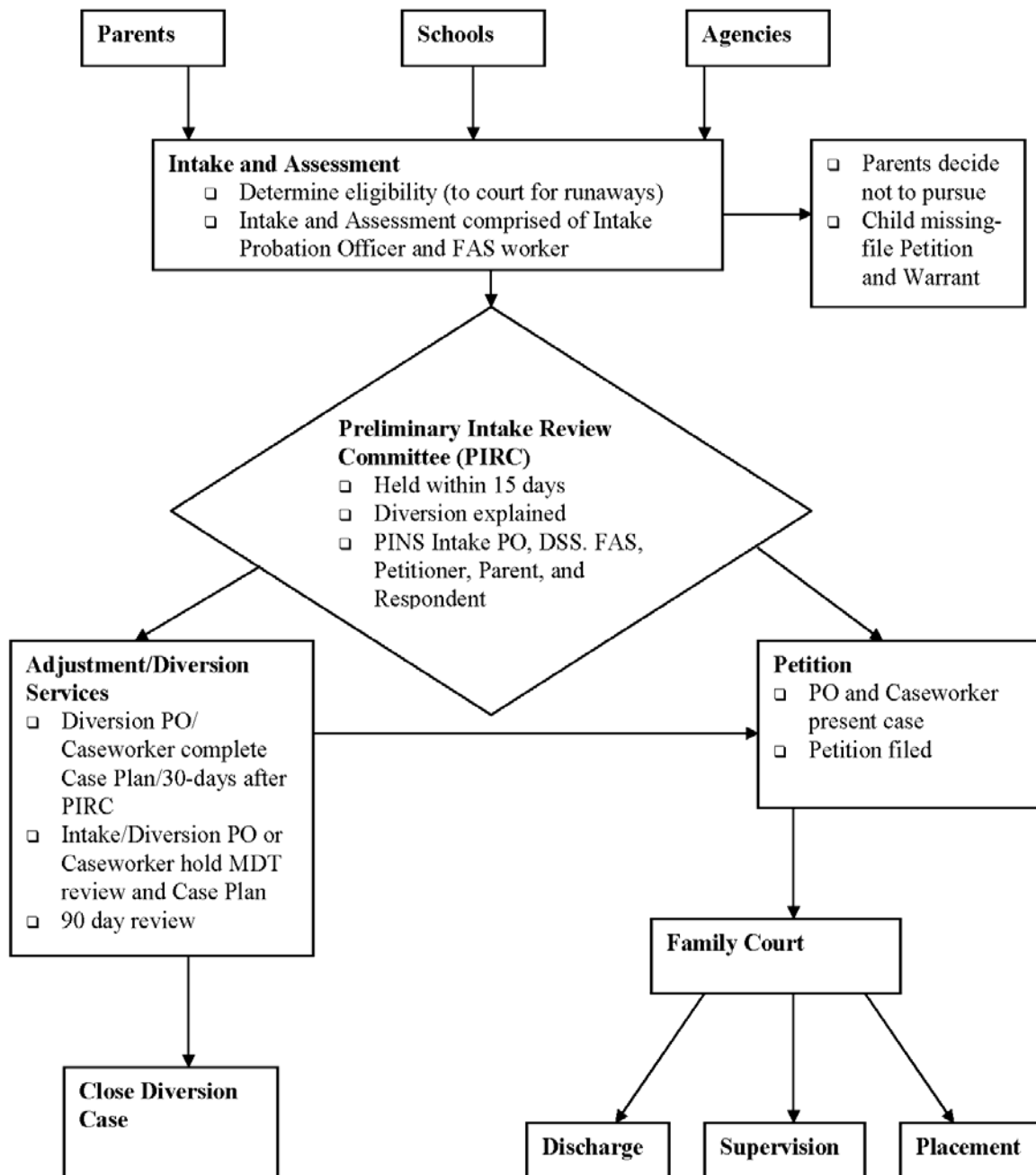
Taken as a whole, the most notable finding from this case flow data is the success of the Schenectady County juvenile justice system in keeping a large (and growing) percentage of at-risk juveniles from entering Family Court, and, for those who do require adjudication, in keeping them out of costly, disruptive, and potentially detrimental out-of-home placements. There is, in effect, a significant and desirable “attrition” process that occurs from the time of an arrest event or other precipitating incident until the final disposition of children who are adjudicated as JDs or PINS. Using 2003 as a case in point, only 12 percent of all PINS and JD complaints underwent Family Court adjudication and only 4 percent required out-of-home placements. By all accounts, then, the Schenectady County juvenile justice system appears to be working quite well – and even improving over time.

Schenectady County PINS and JD Flow Charts

The flow charts on the following pages describe the process used by Schenectady County to address the needs of PINS and JDs who are entering the juvenile justice system. The charts indicate referral sources, comprehensive intake and assessment procedures, and opportunities for adjustment and diversion services.

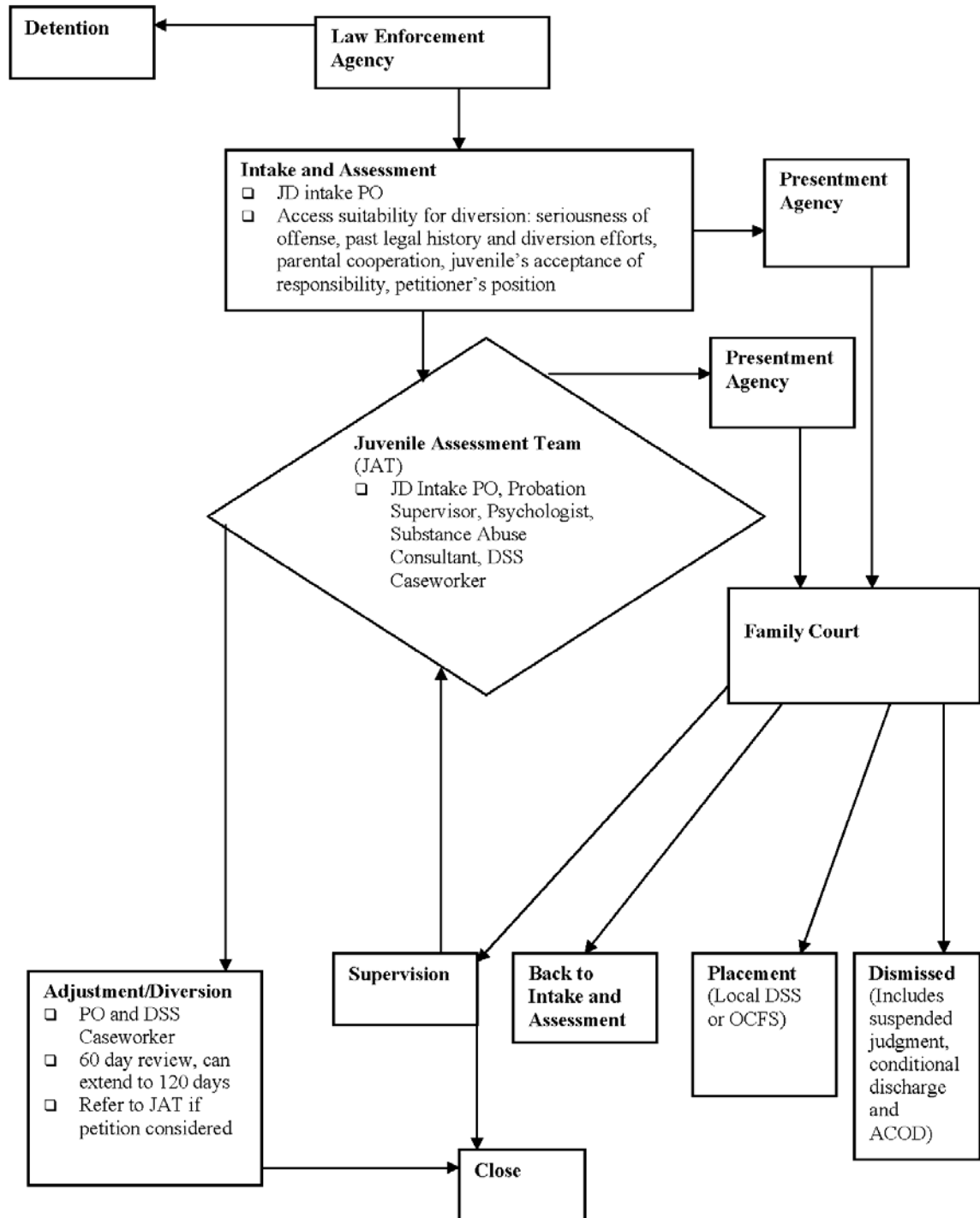
Flow Chart 1

Schenectady County PINS Flow Chart



Flow Chart 2

Schenectady County DSS/Probation Collaboration JD Flow Chart



Summary and Key Issues

The data and analysis presented above offers a detailed portrait of important trends and risk factors impacting the juvenile population in the City of Schenectady, as well as a snapshot of those children currently within, or at risk of entering, the juvenile justice system. The following section summarizes our key findings and highlights emerging issues that should be considered in developing effective targeted strategies to mitigate juvenile delinquency in Schenectady.

- ❖ ***Demographics:*** The 5-14 year old juvenile population in the City of Schenectady has grown substantially since 1990, while the demographic mix of this population has also changed markedly over the last decade. These changes need to be taken into account in developing successful prevention and intervention programs for an increasingly diverse juvenile population.
- ❖ ***Poverty Levels:*** Socio-economic deprivation is a major issue in the City of Schenectady, with at least 20 percent of the children in three municipal zip codes residing in poverty and more than half of all children in another zip code living under the federal poverty rate. Since socioeconomic status is one of the primary risk factors associated with delinquent behavior, especially among young children, such high poverty rates mean that a substantial portion of the City's children are at greater risk of engaging in delinquent behavior or becoming PINS/JDs.
- ❖ ***Risk and Protective Factors:*** On the whole Schenectady's juvenile population, and its youth in the juvenile justice system, have higher risk factor and lower protective factor profiles than similarly situated children in other counties around the state and the nation. As both the CTC and YASI data indicate, many juveniles in Schenectady live in high-risk environments, i.e. face significant family, peer, and community pressures, yet often lack the kind of individual or family resources that might help offset these pressures. As a result, a substantial proportion of these youth is at elevated risk of engaging in delinquent or violent behavior and becoming enmeshed in the juvenile justice system.
- ❖ ***School Commitment:*** A significant number and percentage of students in the Schenectady City School District have been disciplined or suspended, another important marker of delinquency and potential impetus for entry into the juvenile justice system. In addition, between half and three quarters of

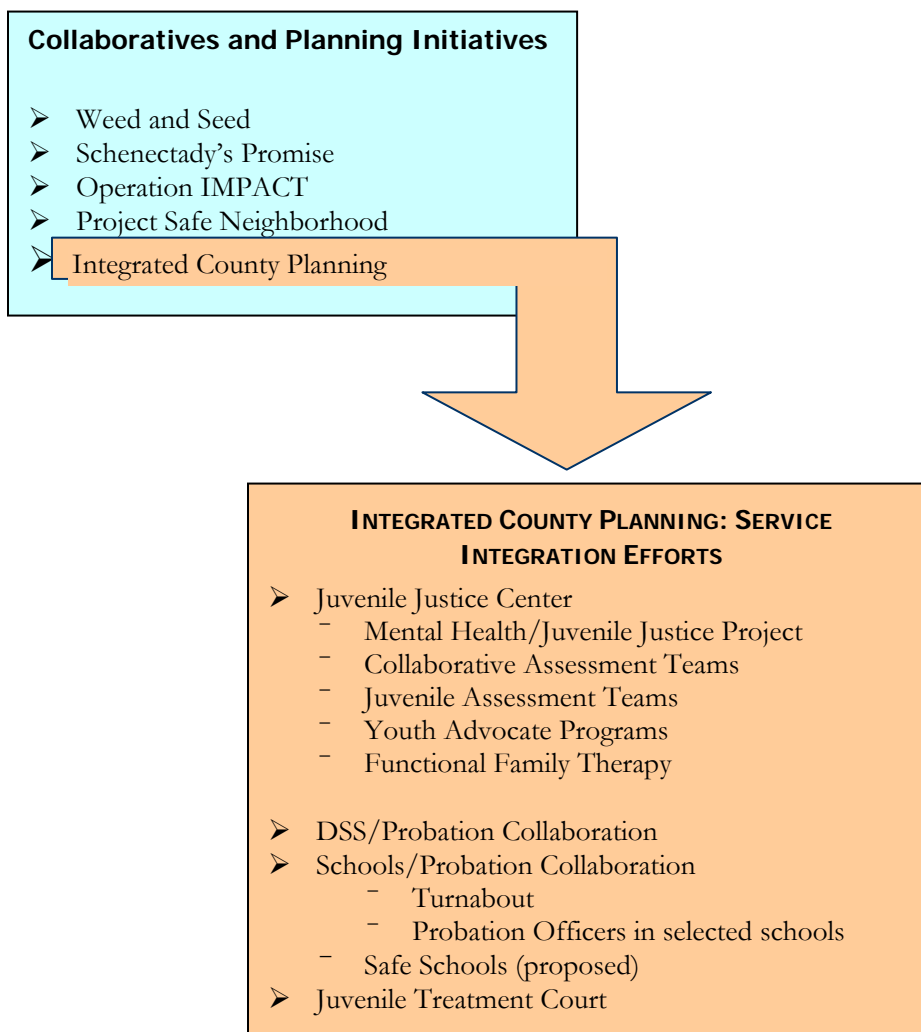
elementary and middle school students in the City School District are testing below the NYS ELA standard for their grade level.

- ❖ ***Substance Abuse:*** A large percentage of middle school students (grades 7 & 8) in the City have a history of alcohol and drug use and may be using these substances on a fairly regular basis.
- ❖ ***Juvenile Arrests:*** Juvenile arrests in the County and City of Schenectady have skyrocketed since 2000, with the increase in arrests most pronounced among 10-12 and 13-15 year olds and females. This growth in juvenile arrests significantly expands the pool of adolescents who are potential entrants into the juvenile justice system.
- ❖ ***Probation Intake Trends:*** Probation intake admissions for both PINS and JDs have risen in recent years.
- ❖ ***PINS/JD Populations:*** A sizeable, and perhaps increasing, number of young children (age 13 and under) are involved in the juvenile justice system. At the same time, females constitute a growing percentage of juvenile arrests and those under probation supervision. In short, the at-risk juvenile and PINS/JD populations are increasingly younger and female.
- ❖ ***Mapping Data:*** There is substantial overlap in the location of juvenile and adult probation intake and supervision cases in the City of Schenectady. These individuals also tend to be clustered in the same areas of the City – particularly in neighborhoods within the 12303 and 12307 zip codes.
- ❖ ***Strength of Juvenile Justice System:*** While the overall picture painted above is somewhat discouraging, one bright spot clearly emerges from the data: the performance of the Juvenile Justice Center and the DSS/Probation Collaboration in Schenectady County. While the number of PINS and JD complaints in the County increased from 1999 to 2003, paralleling the growth in juvenile arrests and other factors, the number of complaints successfully adjusted or diverted rose from 76 to nearly 90 percent. During the same period the percentages of complaints adjudicated to family court and receiving out of home placements were cut in half. By 2003, only 4% of the total juvenile intake population required some form of outside placement.

County, City and Neighborhood Collaborations and Planning Initiatives in Schenectady

The needs assessment has two important components—1) the compilation and analysis of data and 2) the identification of resources and efforts underway to reduce crime and better support communities and the children, youth and families who live there. This section highlights selected efforts that are currently underway and potential initiatives to build upon as the JCEC planning process moves forward. The following graphic highlights these efforts. More detailed information on each of these innovations is provided below.

Figure 14: Collaborative Planning in the City of Schenectady



Weed and Seed—The Weed and Seed Initiative is rooted in the strategy to “weed out” the criminals that perpetuate fear and danger in communities and to “seed” the community with positive

programs to help revitalize the neighborhood and improve safety. In Schenectady, after surveying residents, compiling additional community studies and consulting with the Schenectady Police Department, various community boards and departments and the school district, the Hamilton Hill and Vale Neighborhoods were identified as a targeted area for the initiative. The challenges of this community include: crime, drug and gun use reduction, job creation, provisions of medical services and health/sex education, and protection of children through parental accountability. Community resident participation has been greatly encouraged, the results of which can be seen in the efforts of neighborhood volunteers.

Schenectady's Promise— The purpose and mission is to create and sustain a safe, healthy community for and with all the diverse children and families in Schenectady County. Numerous participants have signed a pledge to participate and work on a variety of Action Teams addressing Safe Places, Opportunities to Serve, Marketable Skills, Caring Adults and Healthy Start.

Operation IMPACT (Integrated Municipal Police Anti-Crime Teams)— This initiative is designed to reduce crime by coordinating the efforts of local, state, and federal law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. Communication and coordination with the Schenectady Weed and Seed Program (and eventually the proposed Project Safe Neighborhood Initiative) is facilitated by liaisons from organizations that are involved with both programs. The top priorities of Operation IMPACT are the reduction of crime, and gun and drug use, in order to improve the quality of life for residents and attract new businesses and employers into the area. To achieve those goals, Operation IMPACT increases the monitoring of the target area, Hamilton Hill, through the presence of more law enforcement personnel, surveillance, sweeps and video monitoring, among other efforts.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) (proposed)— This is a federal program that aims to reduce and end gun violence through collaboration and pooling of resources with supportive organizations.

Integrated County Plan— The Schenectady County Integrated County Plan operates under a united vision with five County Priority Goals, each with clear performance targets. The goals include 1) Families will provide children with safe and nurturing environments, 2) Children and youth will have optimal physical and emotional health, 3) Children will leave school prepared to live, learn and work in a community as economically self-sufficient, contributing members of society, 4) Children and youth will demonstrate good citizenship as law-abiding, contributing members of their families, schools and communities, 5) Children and youth will be raised in families with sufficient economic resources to meet their basic needs.

These initiatives provide a strong backdrop for the work of the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition. As identified in Figure 14, the Integrated County Plan is particularly relevant because it promotes a range of service integration and other efforts to better support children, youth and their families. As a result of integrated county planning, the following efforts have been implemented.

❖ **Juvenile Justice Center**— This center is an innovative county effort to support youth and their families and increase adjustment and diversion efforts for PINS and JDs. Success of the Center is demonstrated by the increase in the number of PINS and JDs who have been diverted from family court involvement. Elements of the Center include:

1. *Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Program*- This is a grant funded initiative through the NYS Office of Children and Families to identify youth with mental health/substance abuse issues and reduce the institutional placement of these youth by providing effective and comprehensive MH/SA assessments and treatment. This grant program funds a full-time psychologist located in the Center for Juvenile Justice, a part-time substance abuse counselor and a full-time member of the Functional Family Therapy Team.
2. *CAT/JAT Teams*—Collaborative/Juvenile Assessment Teams are located in six schools throughout Schenectady County. The Teams are made up of Probation, DSS and school staff and meet regularly to provide a forum for reviewing individual cases. The Teams also provide a context for joint planning and the implementation of school-wide strategies.

3. *Youth Advocate Programs* – This community-based program provides wraparound services for youth and families who may be, are or have been subject to compulsory care, supervision or incarceration. YAP provides individualized in-home intervention while protecting the safety of the individual and the community. The core functions of advocate programs are designed to build on the strengths of the young person so that families can remain together.
4. *Functional Family Therapy* – FFT is a program with a twenty-five year documented history of success in assisting youth with problems ranging from conduct disorder to drug use through family intervention. The therapy program is flexible enough to meet the needs of individual children and their families whether the care is delivered in an outpatient or home environment. The main goals of the program are to engage and motivate youth and their families positively to change their behavior, educate family about utilizing community resources and prevent relapses of negative behavior.

❖ **DSS/Probation Collaborative**—The collaboration between the two departments continues to function at a high level of effectiveness and efficiency; it is this collaboration that led to the County’s ability to create the Center for Juvenile Justice. Both agencies participate in all case planning including both JD and PINS cases. The joint planning around individual cases and overall issues has been very productive in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses as well as gaps in services.

❖ **Schools/Probation/DSS Collaboration**— The Schenectady County Probation Department has assigned Probation Officers to six County schools as a pre-PINS service. This new approach has offered expedient responsiveness for schools when a youth has been identified as having potential PINS behaviors. PINS Case Managers are also geographically assigned to school districts and have constant contact with school personnel.

1. *Turnabout* - Turnabout is a truancy prevention program in Schenectady City Middle Schools formed as a collaborative effort between the county, the schools and Berkshire Farms to end school truancy. This school based program aims to provide early intervention services in conjunction

with families when students have five unexcused absences from school.

- ❖ **Juvenile Treatment Court**—This NYS Office of Court Administration initiative began accepting youth in January, 2005. The Treatment Court Team provides a very diverse and multi-disciplinary approach to address the needs of young people with substance abuse issues. The mission of the Schenectady County Treatment Court is to *“reduce substance abuse, unlawful, unhealthy and unsafe behaviors of young people who come before Family Court. This will be accomplished through treatment, judicial supervision and coordinated strength-based services/supports for youth and their families which will result in a safer community”*. The first six months of this program has shown exceptional results in creating a multi-agency collaborative approach to addressing the needs of young people, identifying services gaps, and most importantly creating a forum for open and honest discussion and the exchange of ideas in a non-adversarial context that is not always possible in the formal Court process.

SECTION III: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

As noted in the Executive Summary, the Coordination Committee including the Project Manager, the Coordinator of the JCEC Project, and CGR (with contributions from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services) interviewed a diverse group of stakeholders who work with at-risk juveniles, including PINS and JD youth, to discuss the primary issues facing youth in Schenectady. In addition, separate focus groups were held with youth and parents to gain their unique perspectives and integrate their suggestions into the planning process. Using a standard questionnaire, feedback was obtained from more than 75 individuals through a combination of one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions with the following: Schenectady County Department of Probation staff; Juvenile Assessment Team (JAT) members; Schenectady County Assistant Chief of Police; Schenectady County Family Court judges; behavioral health services professionals; school personnel including the Attendance Officer for the Schenectady schools; representatives from community provider agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club and Carver Community Center; concerned parents, including representatives of the Coalition for Parents That Care; and at-risk youth. (A complete listing of interview and focus group participants is included in Appendix F). The information obtained through these interviews was then entered into an Access database, coded, and analyzed by CGR staff. The following section highlights the key and/or recurring themes that emerged from this process. It reflects stakeholder impressions and perceptions about the major strengths, issues, and opportunities for improvement in the current juvenile service system in Schenectady County.

Strengths to Build Upon

Although stakeholders acknowledged the significant problems and obstacles facing at-risk youth and their families in the City of Schenectady, many also emphasized that the City and County are well-positioned to address these issues – not only in terms of the range and quality of programs and services available to these individuals, but also in the dedication of those who provide these

services to bring positive change to the community. Other prominent strengths identified through our interviews include:

- ❖ *Juvenile Justice System* – As the juvenile probation case flow data indicates, and the interviews corroborated, Schenectady County offers a rich menu of diversion services that have been highly successful in reducing the number of PINS and JD youth who go to Family Court. Thus, even as more youth have entered the juvenile justice system in recent years, the County (through the Juvenile Justice Center and DSS-Probation Collaboration) has become increasingly effective at providing a range of supportive services to address youth and family disruption. The Juvenile Justice Center was also cited as a prominent example of effective cross-system collaboration between the Departments of Social Services, Probation, and Mental Health.
- ❖ *Strong Collaborative Efforts* – Stakeholders emphasized that there are several constructive partnerships and collaborations between service providers in Schenectady, as well as many coalitions and task forces attempting to institute positive changes in the community. These partnerships include coordinated service provision among County provider agencies through Collaborative Assessment Teams (CAT) and Juvenile Assessment Teams (JAT), as well as community-based collaborative programs such as Weed and Seed and Schenectady’s Promise.
- ❖ *Innovative Service Models* – The Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT), both evidence-based, ‘best practice’ models, were touted as examples of service models currently being utilized in Schenectady that have shown great promise for reducing juvenile delinquency.
- ❖ *Commitment to Youth Development* – Stakeholders pointed to a large number of youth service programs and facilities in the City, as well as an overall “sentiment that youth are open to services and are looking for guidance, appreciation, and recognition.” And this includes troubled and at-risk youth. For example, programs like the Carver Community Center provide tutorial services for children who have been suspended from school long term and the Craig Street Boys and Girls Club provides after school and evening youth development services.

- ❖ *School System* – Schenectady has a good school system with concerned administration, teachers, and staff that acknowledges its problems/weaknesses and seeks to make needed improvements. School Resource Officers (SROs) and the “four-houses” high school structure were both referred to as particularly effective resources.
- ❖ *Small City and Neighborhood Environment* – Interview participants emphasized that Schenectady is a small city comprised of clearly defined neighborhoods. This feature allows Schenectady to build upon the familiar neighborhoods with outreach and services geared to the residents who live there.

Environmental Factors

A number of demographic and socio-economic factors were highlighted by stakeholders as having an important, and generally negative, impact on family and community stability and juvenile delinquency in the City of Schenectady. These factors closely mirrored and underscored the data presentation and analysis provided in the needs assessment portion of this Plan.

- ❖ *Poverty* – Not surprisingly, given the poverty data presented earlier, the impact of poor economic conditions and a lack of economic opportunity emerged as consistent themes in the interviews. The City of Schenectady has many low-income and working poor families, and participants recognized that a lack of financial resources is a contributing factor in delinquency. High poverty rates – especially intergenerational poverty and long-term involvement in the welfare system – were perceived as important influences on family instability and anti-social attitudes and behavior.
- ❖ *Demographic Changes* – Shifts in the City’s demographic composition, especially the influx of transplants from New York City, were frequently cited as playing a role in the increase of juvenile delinquency and the decline of neighborhood cohesiveness in Schenectady. A growth in “transient people with little interest in community development” moving in and out of the City also has contributed to the lack of community stability. An increase in residents from New York City was perceived by multiple stakeholders as directly related to the rise in violent crime, the drug trade, gang violence, and aggressive behavior among youth; it should be noted, however, that several other participants

explicitly challenged this perspective. In addition, Guyanese immigrants were noted as helping to restore and rehabilitate homes in Hamilton Hill.

- ❖ *Aggressive and Violent Behavior* – An increase in violent behavior and an emerging gang culture appear to be playing a significant role in juvenile crime and delinquency. Numerous stakeholders consistently noted the increase in violence by young girls as an emerging issue. Gang prevention programs are operating but their effectiveness is unclear.
- ❖ *Community Identity* – Community disorganization has become a significant concern in the City of Schenectady. On the positive side, however, the existence of well-defined neighborhoods with distinct histories and sense of identities, while somewhat weaker than in the past, remains a powerful legacy in the City. Schenectady retains a strong sense of community pride and civic identification. The fact that so many residents still identify with their neighborhood and city – truly see it as “home” – offers both a foundation and opportunity for community mobilization and revitalization efforts.

Issues and Service Gaps

In the course of the interviews and focus groups, stakeholders were asked to identify the most prominent issues and service gaps that have emerged in their efforts to strengthen youth and families and reduce or prevent juvenile crime and delinquency. As we will see, many of these issues are related to the environmental factors and even the strengths identified above – and most have a direct bearing on the suggestions also provided by participants to ameliorate juvenile crime and delinquency in the City.

- ❖ *Cooperation and Collaboration* – Although Schenectady has initiated several successful collaborative efforts, as noted in the review of Strengths above, the need for better communication and coordination among service providers was a repeated refrain among stakeholders. Competition between programs, the issue of “everyone doing their own thing,” the problem of overlapping or duplicative services, inconsistency in program expectations and follow-through, and lack of understanding of available service systems among providers, schools, agencies, and consumers were all raised as issues in various settings and by multiple stakeholders. The need for better integration of existing services and

coordinated planning to fill existing service gaps was likewise frequently mentioned.

- ❖ *Early Intervention and Prevention* – Another oft-mentioned concern was the paucity of early intervention and prevention programs and services, especially for younger (elementary school age) children. The ability to identify and help children who are exhibiting the “early warning signs” of delinquency, and therefore forestall their possible entry into the juvenile justice system, was spoken of as both a major issue and objective by stakeholders. Similarly, the need to reach juveniles when they are most responsive to adult intervention in order to prevent aggressive or delinquent behavior from escalating was identified as a key impetus for more preventive programs for youth.
- ❖ *Parent Engagement/Responsibility* – A closely related, and frequently articulated, issue was the need to increase parental involvement and responsibility in the City of Schenectady. There were two parts to this. One was the absence of parental supervision of children and engagement in their lives. Linked to this was the lack of innovative parent support, resource building, and strength based parenting programs for at-risk families. Developing ways to both hold parents more accountable and improve their long-term parenting skills was a driving force behind the recommendations in this area.
- ❖ *Family-Centered Services* – A number of stakeholders highlighted the lack of comprehensive, holistic services for troubled families and youth. Many services focus on the child but do not take into account the entire family and their need for additional supports and services. In this context, the problem of reintroducing at-risk youth who have received intensive care and made significant strides back into a troubled family setting becomes particularly acute. The desire (and need) to break intergenerational cycles of violence, crime, delinquency, and neglect – the notion that “we must treat parents as well as children” – was a leitmotif behind these concerns.
- ❖ *Youth Development and Employment Development Services* – Despite the seemingly large number of youth services and facilities available in the City, another frequently mentioned area of concern was the lack of youth development opportunities, especially limited after-school, evening and weekend youth programs, structured summer

activities and employment opportunities, and job development or vocational training programs. This is especially worrisome in the case of at-risk youth, who would otherwise be most likely to go unsupervised or without productive options for their free time.

- ❖ *Mentors/Role Models* – Many stakeholders cited the benefits of having mentors and role models in the lives of at-risk and PINS/JD youth, but most felt that existing programs are unable to meet the demand for such services. The absence of positive male role models was seen as particularly troubling, especially given the very high percentage of single parent (mostly female) households in the City.
- ❖ *Resources and Funding* – The problems of maintaining adequate funding for good programs, expanding service hours, providing adequate staff to meet program demands and foster effective working relationships with other agencies, and ensuring manageable caseloads were all broached by stakeholders.
- ❖ *Service Access/Gaps* – A host of issues were raised in this vein, ranging from too much red tape before clients can receive services to long waiting periods before programs become available. A correlate to these concerns is that funding streams with restrictive eligibility criteria may prevent low-income families from receiving the services they need. Other prominent access issues were the absence of good public transportation to services scattered across the City and program demand exceeding capacity. Service gaps mentioned included the need for bilingual or multiracial services and providers, inadequate home treatment and aftercare services, and the lack of mental health providers/treatment for youth.
- ❖ *Schools* – The high drop out and suspension rates in City of Schenectady schools were repeatedly cited as concerns, as were zero tolerance policies that lead to early law enforcement involvement and criminal records in the lives of troubled youth. Reducing truancy rates was a prominent related issue. Some stakeholders also perceived open high school campuses to be an open invitation for truancy and delinquency.

Priority Areas

In addition to the information on strengths, issues, environmental factors, and service gaps presented above, stakeholders were solicited for recommendations about how to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency and better support children, youth, and families.

Based upon CGR's compilation and analysis of these suggestions, four broad priority areas emerged for the City of Schenectady. They are:

- 1) *Community Building* – to enhance neighborhood and community vitality and create opportunities for greater involvement in community life by children, youth and families;
- 2) *Family Support Services* – to assist families in their role as primary caregiver and to increase parental engagement and responsibility;
- 3) *Youth Service Continuum* – to help children and youth succeed by supporting them early, providing services to build their skills and capacities, and fully supporting those involved in the juvenile justice system;
- 4) *Coordination, Quality, and Accountability* – to increase collaboration, communication, and quality control among youth service providers to make better use of existing resources and enhance the effectiveness of services.

These four priority areas and accompanying objectives served as a general framework for the development of the recommended directions presented in the following section, and informed the discussions of the workgroups charged with helping to craft the recommendations. These priority areas may also be used to assist stakeholders in developing policy objectives and coordinated strategies for future efforts to combat juvenile crime and delinquency and support children, youth and families. (See Appendix G for a complete description of the four priority areas and their related objectives).

In order to translate these general priorities into more specific service strategies, four working groups composed of members of the JCEC, the Coordinating Committee, and other interested parties were formed around the four priority areas. Each working group was charged with developing a recommended direction and strategy for one of the priority areas. The product of their deliberations was then forwarded to CGR, which further refined the proposals into the four integrated recommendations presented in the following section.

SECTION IV: RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS

What follows are recommended directions to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency and better support children, youth and families in the City of Schenectady. These recommendations build on the themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups, incorporate the ideas and suggestions of the four workgroups, and reflect the advice offered by other JCEC members. Taken together the recommendations offer a holistic, integrated strategy that encompasses the four key elements in any effort to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency: prevention, intervention, suppression, and accountability.

Goal One

Build on the Juvenile Justice Center's success and provide support to prevent more youth from engaging in juvenile crime and delinquency, divert more juveniles from the family court process, and reduce recidivism among juvenile delinquents.

Objective: Provide or ensure a full range of prevention, intervention, and suppression services for high-risk youth and those involved in the juvenile justice system in targeted neighborhoods in the City of Schenectady.

Strategy: Develop a Community Probation Officers Program (CPOP). A central piece of the recommended directions to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency in Schenectady is the development of a Community Probation Officers Program. The key element of this comprehensive, integrated initiative is to provide a full range of prevention, intervention, suppression, and accountability services for high-risk youth and those involved in the juvenile justice system in targeted neighborhoods. The program would involve assigning four Probation Officers with extended day and evening hours to the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. These Community Probation Officers (CPOs) would be located in the Mt. Pleasant Middle School and the Schenectady High School during the day and in Hamilton Hill community-based organizations during the evening hours. CPOs would provide a variety of traditional and nontraditional probation services, helping to enhance

neighborhood and family connections and working collaboratively with police, youth development programs and the schools. Program components are detailed below.

A. Prevention and Intervention – Prevention and intervention services would include the following:

- An ongoing neighborhood presence of Community Probation Officers during the day and evening hours, with a goal of early identification and assistance to youth at risk of engaging in delinquent behaviors. Due to their extended availability in Hamilton Hill, CPOs would be immersed in the community, knowledgeable about available resources, and able to participate in Weed and Seed and other community-based efforts to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency.
- **Working closely with schools** and School Resource Officers (SRO) to address truancy intervention – including home visits and sweeps for children attending the Mt. Pleasant Middle School and Schenectady City High School.
- **Collaboration with county and community agencies** serving at-risk youth and providing referrals to FFT, YAP, mental health and substance abuse services, youth development services, recreational programs and vocational and employment services.
- **Collaboration between police and CPOs** to ensure the availability of nighttime security checks, immediate response following JD arrests during evening hours, and triage services during arrests. CPOs would provide immediate referrals to Probation services and crisis intervention for youth and families. This would also include police/probation partnerships to reduce overnight detention.
- **Delivering Aggression Replacement Training (ART)** services with three primary components – social skill building, anger management training, and moral reasoning – at schools and community recreation programs.

B. Suppression and Accountability – Suppression and accountability services would include:

- **Coordination with Operation IMPACT** in the Hamilton Hill area and the rest of the city, including intensive monitoring and supervision of at risk youth as well as those in the juvenile justice system and quick response to address community safety issues.
- **Accountability-based sanctions** and use of a graduated sanctions strategy to prevent, reduce and suppress juvenile crime through intensive supervision, nighttime home visits, electronic monitoring, house arrest, restrictions on movement and activities, community service, and drug testing and reporting.
- **Referrals to restorative justice efforts** to promote community restitution, community service, and competency development.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

This program will create four new Community Probation Officer positions to perform traditional and nontraditional probation services primarily in the Hamilton Hill and Mount Pleasant areas. The primary objective is to provide supervision and support for at-risk, PINS, and JD youth “at home, in school, and in the community.” The focus of these new officers will be on community presence and intervention services designed to minimize the risk of and reduce the likelihood of escalation of delinquent behavior. CPOs will provide expanded coverage and accessibility of services between the hours of 8:00 AM to 11:00 PM. They will be based in the community and located in community based organizations and schools. Due to the broad range of responsibilities for these positions, the number of youth receiving intensive caseload supervision will be small. CPOs will be charged with providing a comprehensive set of services to the target populations, including the following roles and responsibilities:

- ❖ Intensive collaboration with police, schools (SROs), community organizations, DSS, Mental Health, parents and others
- ❖ Offering new program services including Effective Black Parenting and ART
- ❖ Developing knowledge of and relationships with the community

- ❖ Serving on key committees such as Prevention/Intervention Treatment, Community Policing, Schenectady's Promise, and Operation IMPACT
- ❖ Enhancing parental contact and accessibility
- ❖ Encouraging parental engagement
- ❖ Connecting youth to community resources and programs
- ❖ Collaborating with and making referrals to juvenile accountability boards

*New Evidence-Based
Program Component
for CPOP*

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) – Designed to alter the behavior of chronically aggressive adolescents and young

anger management, and moral reasoning. The program incorporates three specific approaches: skill streaming, which uses modeling, role-playing, and performance feedback to teach prosocial skills; anger control training; and training in moral reasoning to enhance youths' sense of fairness and justice regarding the needs of others and encourage them to imagine the perspectives of others when they confront various problem situations.

The program consists of a 10-week, 30-hour intervention administered to groups of 8 to 12 juvenile offenders thrice weekly. During these 10 weeks, participating youths typically attend three 1-hour sessions per week (one session per approach). The program relies on repetitive learning techniques to teach participants to control impulsiveness and anger and to use more appropriate behaviors. Guided group discussion is also used to correct antisocial thinking.

Goal Two

Encourage personal responsibility and community involvement among youth who have engaged in delinquent behavior and juvenile crime.

Objective: Strengthen Schenectady's neighborhoods by encouraging community stakeholders and service providers to address juvenile crime and delinquency by adopting a restorative justice philosophy and supporting restorative justice programs.

Strategy: Develop a Restorative Justice for Juveniles Approach. A balanced approach to restorative justice includes the following components:

- A. *Accountability*** – Restitution, community service, and victim-offender mediation designed to create awareness in offenders of the harmful consequences of their actions, require them to make amends to victims and their community, and empower victims as active participants in the juvenile justice process.
- A. *Community Protection*** – Community based surveillance and sanctioning systems to ensure safe and secure neighborhoods, channel offenders' time and energy into productive activities during non-school hours, and provide a progression of consequences for noncompliance with supervision requirements as well as incentives/rewards for positive behavior.
- B. *Competency Development*** – Work experience, active learning, and community service that provide youth with opportunities to develop social and work skills, interact positively with adults, and demonstrate publicly that they are capable of productive and responsible behavior.

To achieve these goals, stakeholders will support and collaborate on key restorative justice initiatives such as Victim-Offender Mediation, Juvenile Community Accountability Boards, Circles of Support and Accountability, and relevant youth development and community service programs. Leadership would be provided by the Law Order Justice (LOJ) Center. Potential partners include Police, Probation, Department of Social Services, CBOs,

community initiatives such as Weed and Seed and Schenectady's Promise, and David Karp from Skidmore. Another partner will be the New York State Community Justice Forum, located at the New York State Council on Children and Families. This Forum is available to provide training and technical assistance on restorative justice principles and practices, with a goal of promoting safe and healthy communities and enhancing public confidence in the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems.

Goal Three

Help at-risk youth to succeed by offering services to build their vocational skills and capacities.

Objective: To provide youth at risk of adjudication, incarceration, and placement with structured vocational and skill-based training in a supervised occupational setting.

Strategy: Develop Juvenile Vocational Services. Given the strong interest in, and recognition of, employment and job readiness training as a prevention and intervention tool, a comprehensive strategy incorporating youth employment, vocational training, job readiness and development instruction, and related services will be developed to help youth acquire the vocational and associated skills necessary to begin careers and become productive members of the community.

A key component of this strategy is the Certificate of Employability (COE). The COE is a certificate issued to youth who participate in a defined, yet flexible curriculum to learn the basic “soft skills” necessary to get – and keep – a job. Graduates of the course must be able to demonstrate fundamental work-related behaviors and skills determined to increase workplace productivity, such as respect for others, acceptance of criticism and dependability. The COE program has been included in the Schenectady City School District’s Strategic Plan and is recognized as a valid program with curriculum that will help students attain vital job and life skills.

These services would be utilized following a petition prior to adjudication to divert the recipients from Family Court. Potential partners would include Probation, DSS, Schenectady Job Training Association (SJTA), Schenectady City School District, Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, union affiliates, and other interested parties. Twenty members of Schenectady’s Chamber have agreed to accept youth for job readiness and job skills programs.

Goal Four

Provide integrated family support and family development services to strengthen families and caregivers and increase their ability to nurture their children.

Objective: Provide targeted intervention services to youth and families at risk of delinquent behavior and prevention services to support and strengthen families with young children.

Strategy: Implement a full range of Family Support and Development Services. Family support and development can take a variety of forms, from primary prevention for families with young children to targeted prevention for families at risk to early intervention and intervention for families who need added and more intensive support. Family support and development services are built on the premise that children and youth will do better when services are provided within the context of their families and address the needs of all family members. These services typically are strength-based, comprehensive, and culturally responsive. Multiple strategies will be adopted to better support and strengthen families and to increase parental accountability. As part of this strategy, efforts will be developed to reach both fathers and mothers.

A. Targeted Intervention Services - Targeted intervention services would include:

- **Effective Black Parenting Program**—Adopt and implement the Effective Black Parenting Program as a critical component of the CPOP to increase the quality of family relationships and child behavior outcomes. This effective parenting program is designed to meet the needs of African-American parents and foster effective family communication, healthy African-American identity, extended family values, child growth and development, and healthy self-esteem. The program is grounded in basic parenting strategies and information appropriate for all socioeconomic status levels but especially for parent of children ages 2 to 12. It is taught in two formats: as a class with 15 three-hour training sessions that emphasize role-

playing and home behavior changes and a one-day seminar for large groups of parents.

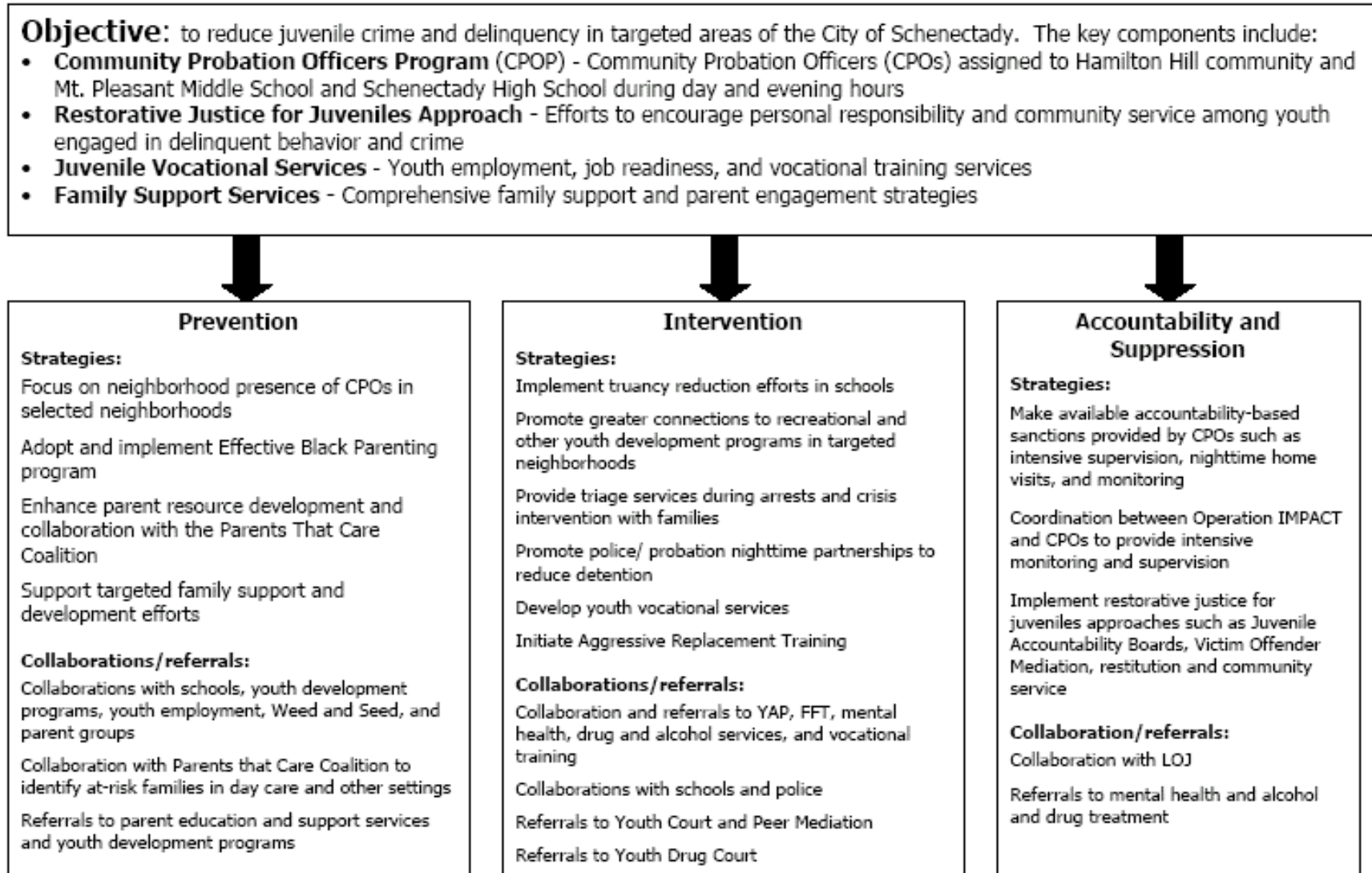
- **Youth Advocate Programs (YAP) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT).** Support and make referrals to established YAP and FFT programs designed to engage youths and their families in positive change and prevent relapses of negative behavior. Key program components that successfully engage parents could also be applied to other services for youth at risk and their families.

B. *Prevention Services* - Prevention services would include:

- **Parental Resource Development.** Collaborate with the Coalition for Parents That Care, an existing community based parental organization, to expand and promote parent engagement, leadership, and parental accountability. Through their network of licensed family day care providers, Parents That Care are positioned to identify and encourage parents to participate in parent education and support activities and create a ready pool of trainers for the Effective Black Parenting Program.
- **Family Support Centers in Schools**—Explore the usefulness of developing Family Resource Centers in schools, targeted to at-risk elementary age children and their families. Family support centers typically result in increased academic outcomes and commitment to school for children and youth and increased parental involvement and engagement in their child's education. Another school-based component to explore is Equal Partnership in Change (EPIC), a community-based truancy prevention effort that encourages the engagement of community stakeholders and the integration of the formal and informal support structures existing in a community.
- **Early Childhood and Family Literacy Initiatives.** Support targeted early childhood initiatives designed to ensure children enter school healthy and ready to learn. Possible strategies to better support families, reduce truancy, and enhance psychosocial interaction among family members include family literacy efforts developed in selected communities.

A schematic figure follows that presents all four recommended directions in an integrated, holistic approach. The schema, Figure 15, is organized by prevention, intervention, and accountability and suppression. It lays out the strategies under each of these headings and identifies the opportunities for collaboration with numerous agencies and organizations.

Figure 15: Reducing Juvenile Crime and Delinquency in the City of Schenectady



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APPENDIX B: RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH DELINQUENCY AND VIOLENCE

| Risk and Protective Factors by Domain | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Risk Factor | | | Protective Factor* |
| Domain | Childhood (ages 6–11) | Adolescence (ages 12–16) | |
| Individual | General offenses Substance abuse Aggressiveness** Hyperactivity/concentration problems Problem (antisocial) behavior Medical, physical problems Low IQ Antisocial attitudes/beliefs Dishonesty** | Aggressiveness** Prior offenses Hyperactivity/concentration problems** Physical violence Risk taking/drug selling Antisocial attitudes/beliefs Crimes against persons Problem (antisocial) behavior Low IQ Substance abuse | Intolerant attitude toward deviance High IQ Positive social orientation Positive beliefs/standards Perceived sanctions for transgressions |
| Family | Socioeconomic status (poverty) Poor parent-child relationship Parental attitudes Low parental involvement Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline Parent-child separation Abusive parents Neglect | Poor parent-child relationship Harsh or lax discipline Poor monitoring/supervision Low parental involvement Parental attitudes Broken home Socioeconomic status (poverty) Abusive parents Family conflict** Single parent households | Parental interaction and involvement Supportive relationships with parents or other adults Parents' positive evaluation of peers |
| School | Poor attitude/performance Behavioral problems | Academic failure+ Poor attitude/performance Low school commitment and educational aspirations Truancy rates School policies (i.e. expulsion) | Commitment to school and educational aspirations Recognition for involvement in positive activities School success |
| Peer Group | Weak social ties Antisocial/delinquent friends | Gang membership Antisocial/delinquent friends Weak social ties Delinquent siblings | Friends who engage in conventional behavior |
| Community | | Neighborhood disorganization Adult crime and drug use | |

*Age of onset not known.

** Stronger for males + Stronger for females **Bold:** Key risk factors

Source: Adapted from Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, and Shader.

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

City of Schenectady Poverty Data – by Age and Zip Code

| 12303 | | | | 12304 | | | 12305 | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty |
| Total Poverty | 27,784 | 2,375 | 8.5% | 20,166 | 3,353 | 16.6% | 4,091 | 1,308 | 32.0% |
| 0-5 years | 2,121 | 302 | 14.2% | 1,834 | 644 | 35.1% | 113 | 43 | 38.1% |
| 6-11 years | 2,422 | 330 | 13.6% | 1,967 | 442 | 22.5% | 93 | 32 | 34.4% |
| 12-17 years | 2,467 | 181 | 7.3% | 1,471 | 289 | 19.6% | 117 | 38 | 32.5% |

| 12306 | | | | 12307 | | | 12308 | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty | Total Number of Children | Children Below Poverty | Percentage Below Poverty |
| Total Poverty | 24,339 | 1,467 | 6.0% | 6,692 | 2,928 | 43.8% | 13,373 | 2,454 | 18.4% |
| 0-5 years | 1,884 | 200 | 10.6% | 806 | 457 | 56.7% | 1,122 | 371 | 33.1% |
| 6-11 years | 1,945 | 119 | 6.1% | 898 | 572 | 63.7% | 1,101 | 265 | 24.1% |
| 12-17 years | 1,707 | 106 | 6.2% | 721 | 375 | 52.0% | 1,224 | 297 | 24.3% |

APPENDIX D: RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS – COUNTY AND CITY OF SCHENECTADY

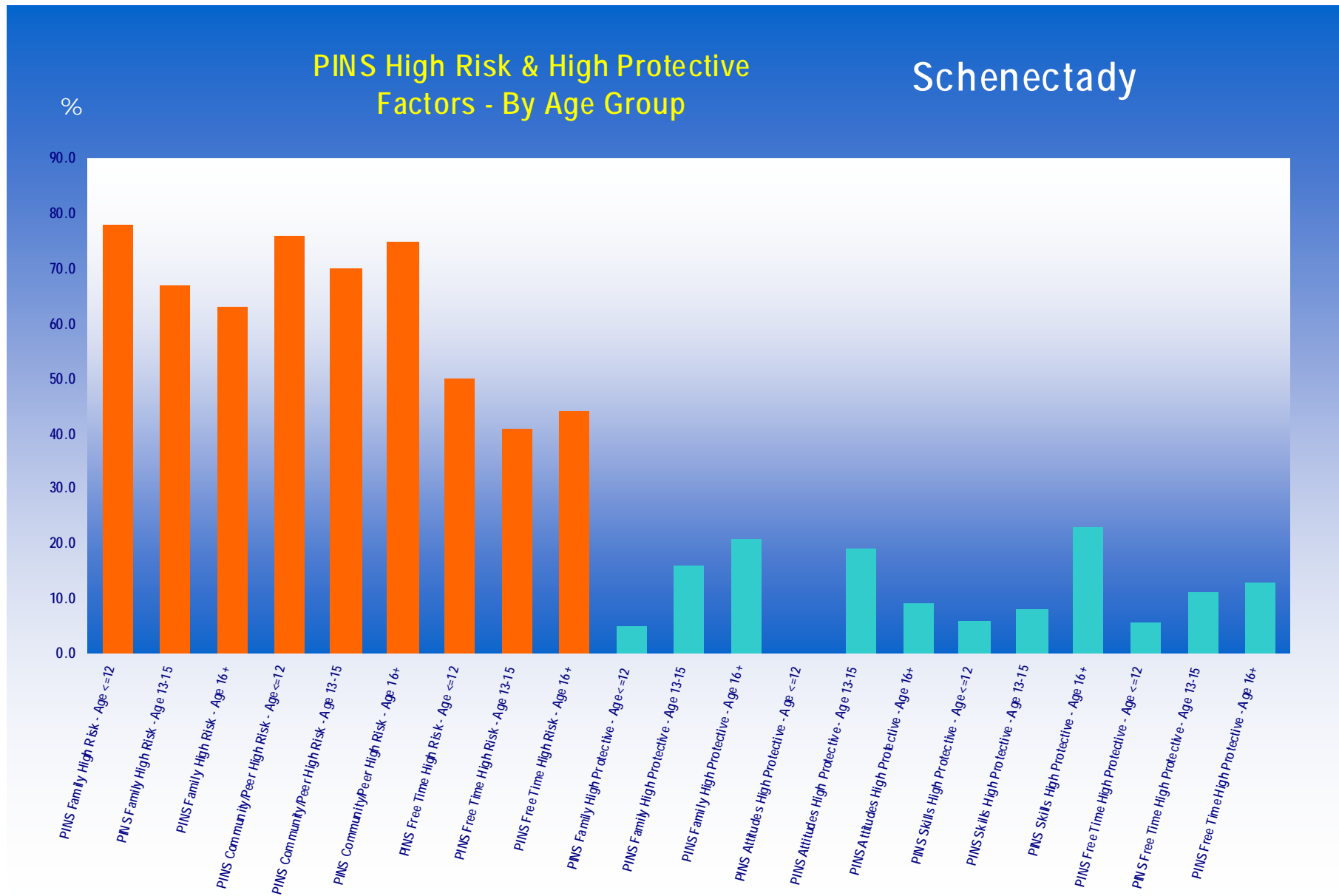
2002 CTC Youth Survey Scale Scores – City of Schenectady

| | Schenectady City School District | CTC Matched Comparison |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Risk Factors (Lower is Better)</i> | | |
| Community Domain | | |
| Community Disorganization | 70 | 53 |
| Personal Transitions and Mobility | 62 | 52 |
| Low Neighborhood Attachment | 59 | 51 |
| Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use and Firearms | 52 | 49 |
| Perceived Availability of Drugs/Firearms | 34 | 47 |
| Family Domain | | |
| Parental Attitudes toward Antisocial Behavior | 53 | 49 |
| Poor Family Supervision | 50 | 46 |
| Family History of Antisocial Behavior | 49 | 45 |
| Poor Family Discipline | 48 | 45 |
| Parental Attitudes Favorable toward ATOD Use | 45 | 45 |
| Family Conflict | * | * |
| School Domain | | |
| Poor Academic Performance | 58 | 51 |
| Low School Commitment | 48 | 53 |
| Peer and Individual Domains | | |
| Friends' Delinquent Behavior | 63 | 53 |
| Gang Involvement | 58 | 50 |
| Attitudes toward Antisocial Behavior | 55 | 52 |
| Early Initiation (of Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior) | 52 | 52 |
| Rebelliousness | 51 | 52 |
| Sensation Seeking | 47 | 50 |
| Friends' Use of Drugs | 45 | 48 |
| Peer Rewards for Antisocial Behavior | 45 | 50 |
| Favorable Attitudes toward ATOD Use | 43 | 48 |
| Low Perceived Risks of Drug Use | 40 | 51 |

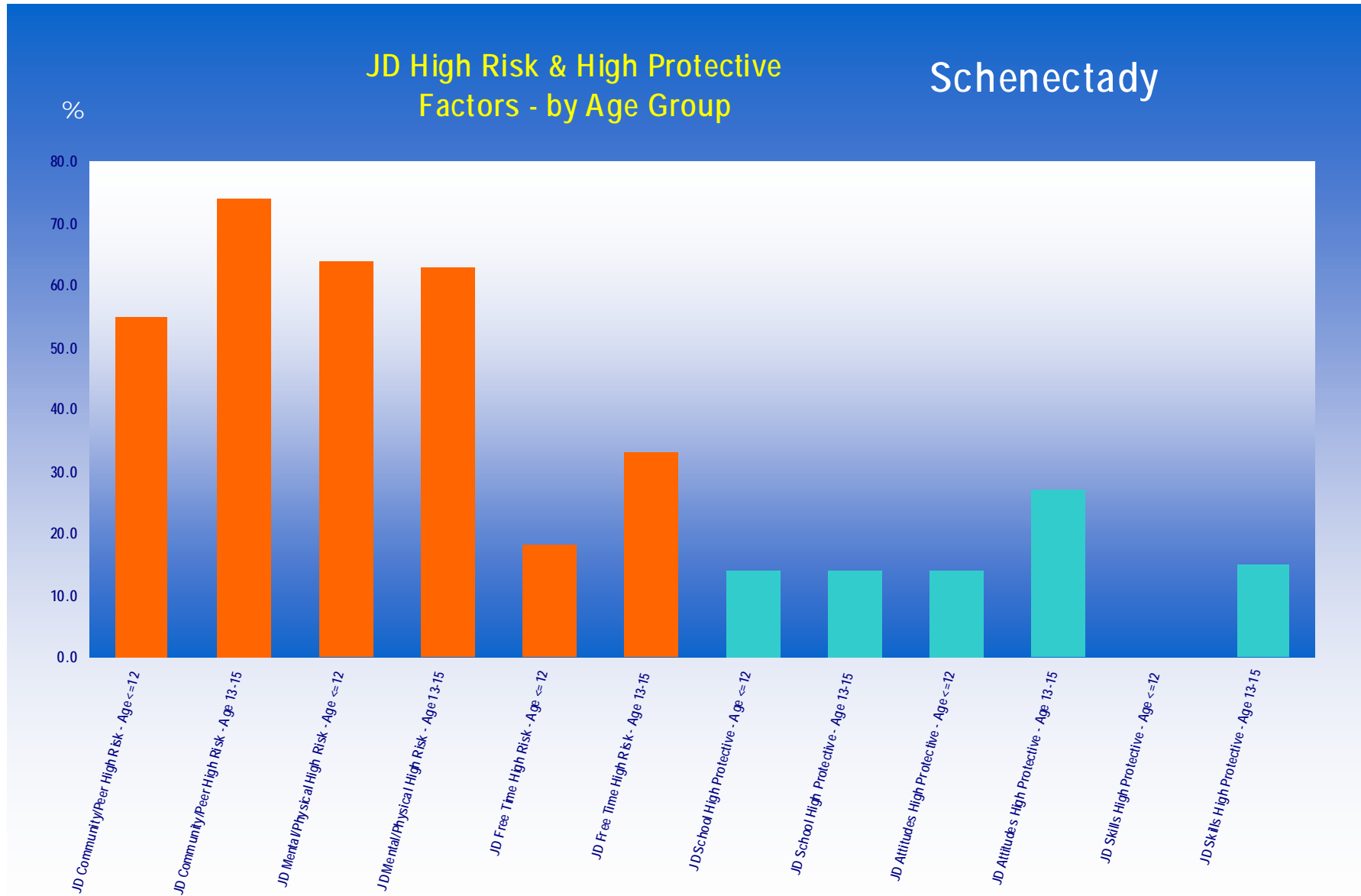
| | Schenectady City School District | CTC Matched Comparison |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Protective Factors (Higher is Better)</i> | | |
| Community Domain | | |
| Rewards for Prosocial Involvement | 41 | 50 |
| Community Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement | * | * |
| Family Domain | | |
| Rewards for Prosocial Involvement | 50 | 54 |
| Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement | 50 | 53 |
| Family Attachment | 45 | 52 |
| School Domain | | |
| Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement | 54 | 48 |
| School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement | 44 | 50 |
| Peer and Individual Domains | | |
| Social Skills | 50 | 49 |
| Belief in the Moral Order | 49 | 47 |
| Religiosity | 48 | 52 |

* This Scale is currently under revision

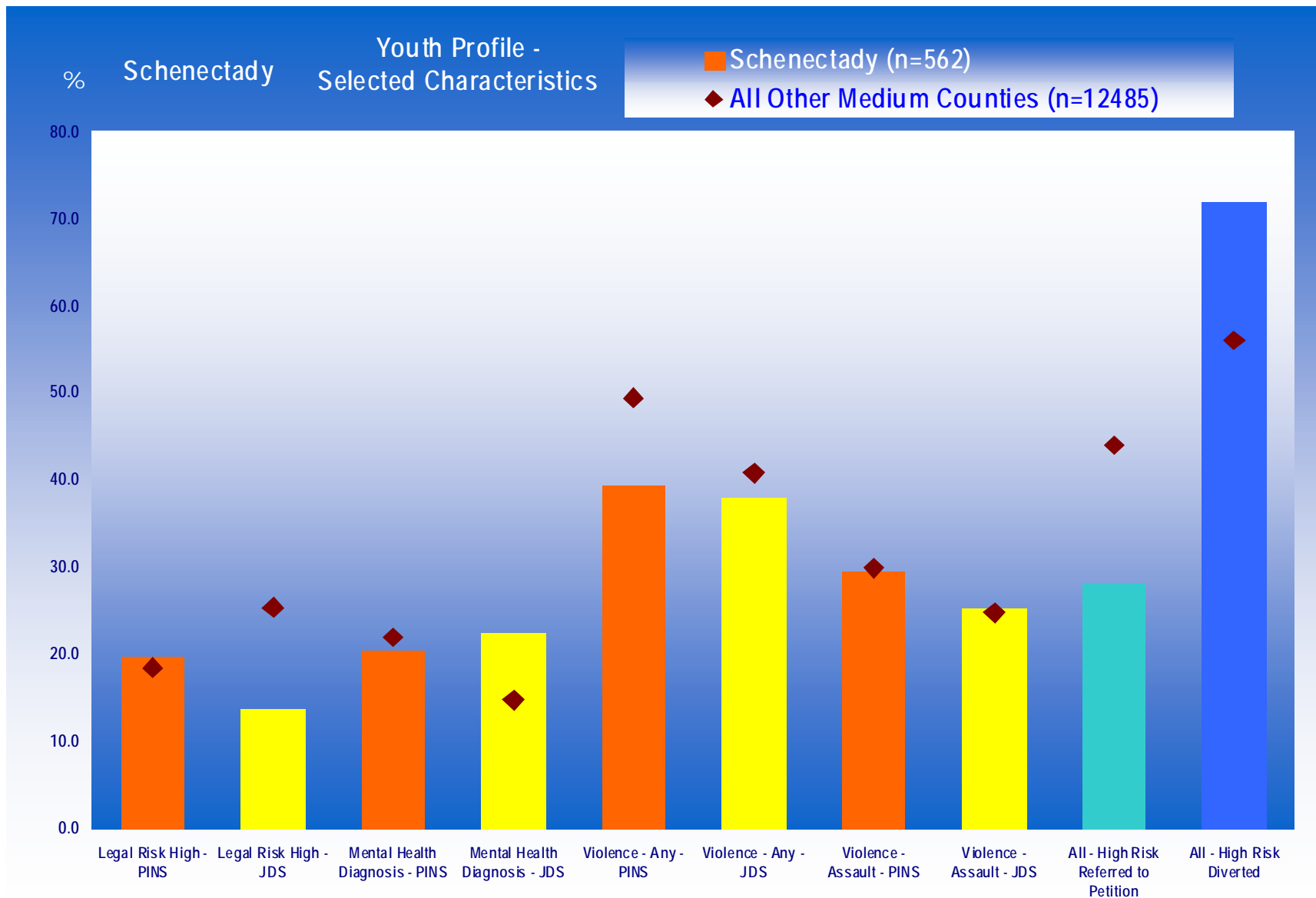
2004 YASI Results for PINS High Risk and High Protective Factors in Schenectady County



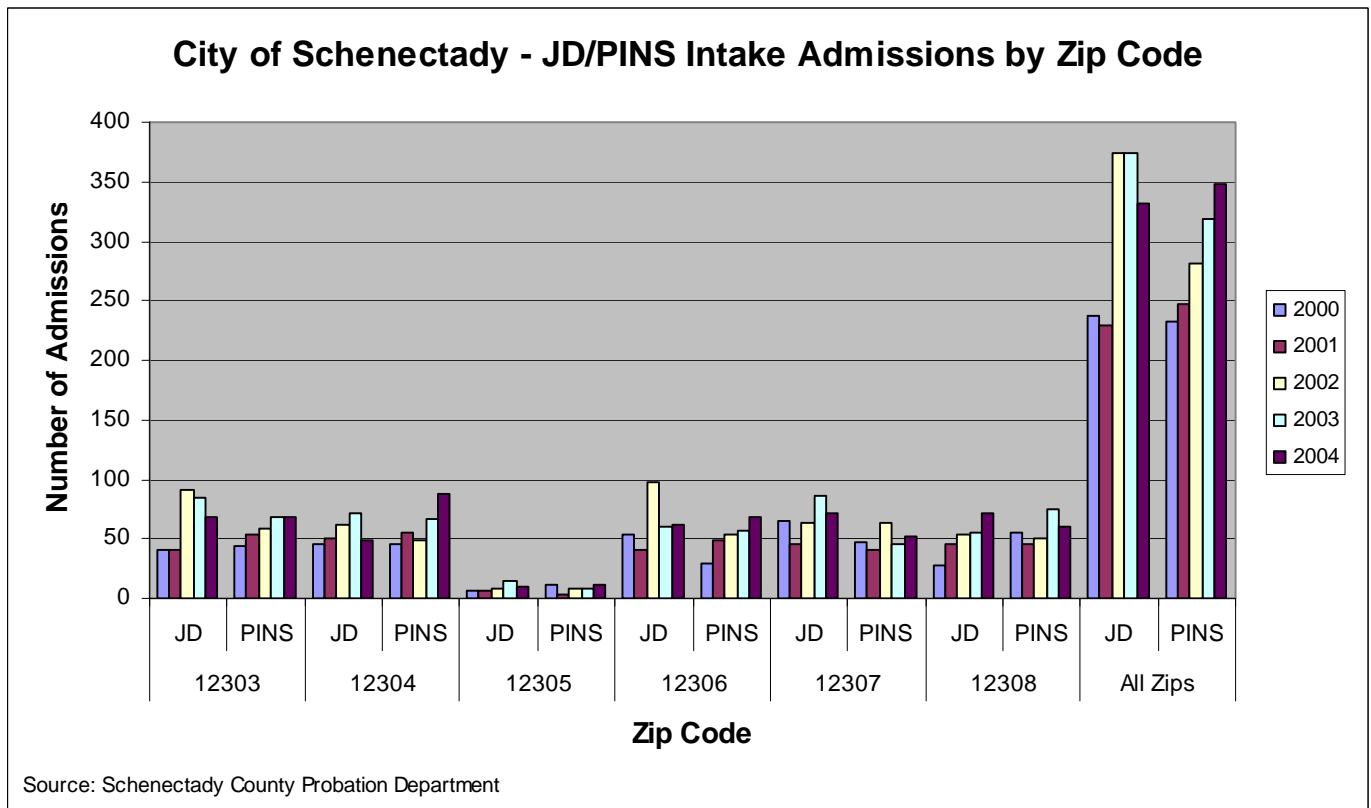
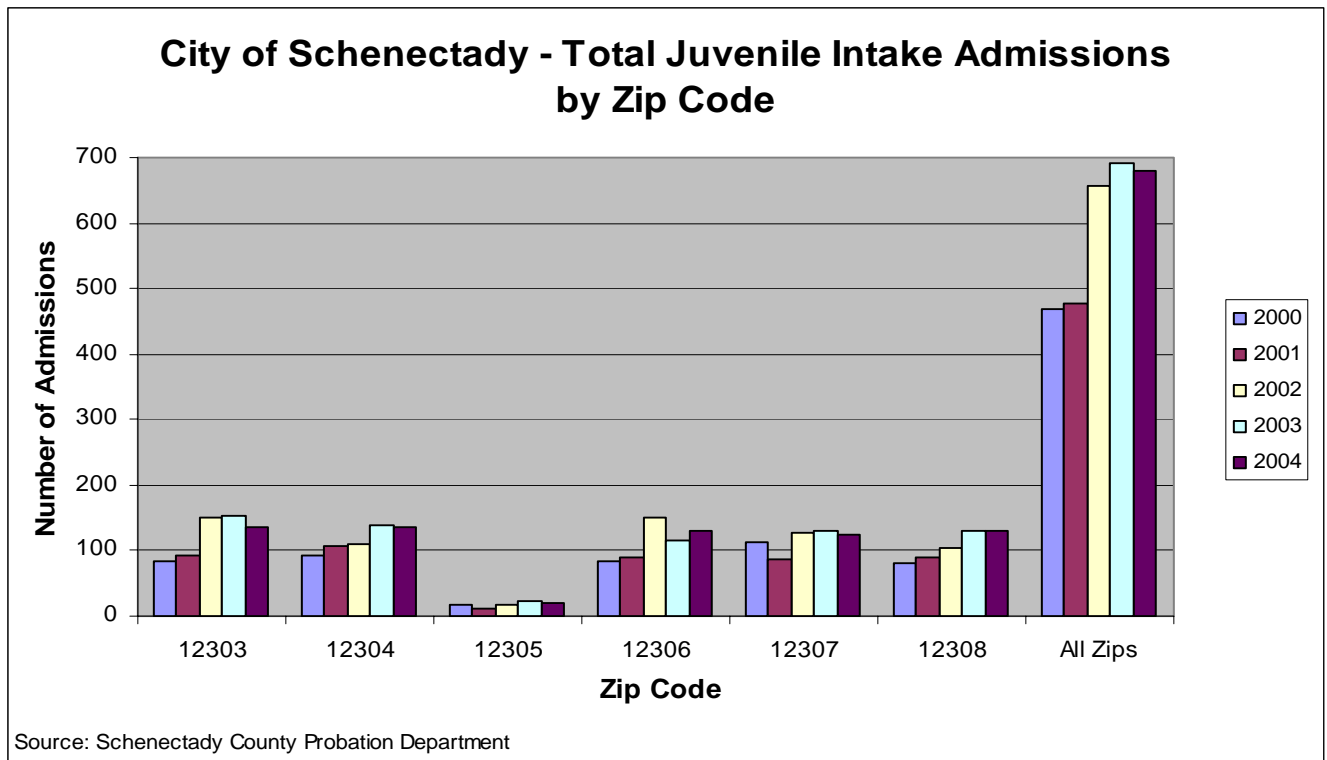
2004 YASI Results for JD High Risk and High Protective Factors in Schenectady County

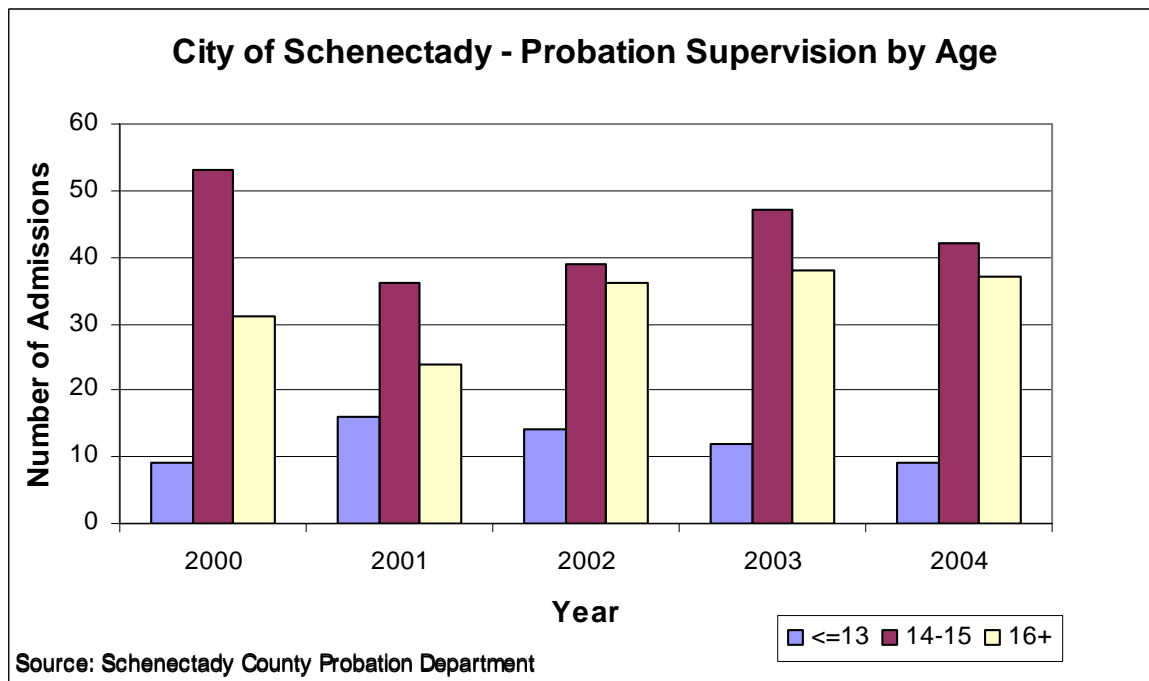
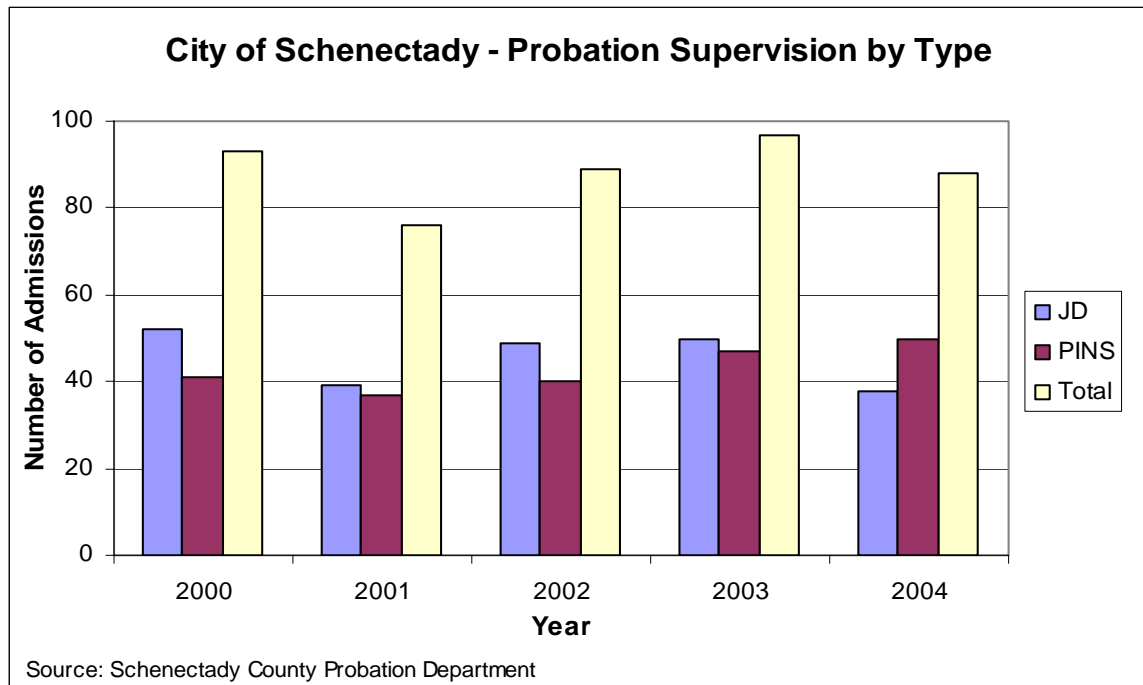


2004 YASI Youth Profile Results for Schenectady County



APPENDIX E: JUVENILE PROBATION DATA





| City of Schenectady - Probation Discharges by Type and Reason | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
| JD – Maximum Expiration | 10 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| JD - Probation Revoked/Discharged New Adjudication | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| JD – Probation Revoked/Discharge Sustained | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| PINS – Maximum Expiration | 24 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 15 |
| PINS – Probation Revoked/Discharge New Adjudication | 0 | -- | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| PINS - Probation Revoked/Discharge Sustained | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 34 | 24 | 5 | 3 | 41 |

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Focus Groups I & II: Advisory Board Members and their delegates

Michael C. Eidens, Chairperson of Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition
 Joseph Mancini, Probation Department, Juvenile Justice Center
 Ethan Korotzer (for Laura Velez), Dept. of Social Services
 Ron Wood (for Shane Bargy), County Youth Bureau
 Darin Samaha, County Office of Community Services
 Kiffy Janiszewski (for Sheila Tebbano), Schenectady City Schools
 Laura Zeligier, Law, Order and Justice Center
 Marion Porterfield, Weed and Seed Program
 Kathleen Rooney, County Manager's Office
 Kevin Burke, County Attorney's Office
 Philip Fields, County Legislature
 Laurie Bucheldor, United Way

Focus Group III: Youth Development Providers

Tom Ciancetta: Craig Street Boys and Girls Club
 Joe Skinner, Youth Advocacy Project
 Trish Faba, Berkshire Prevention
 Tim Ferrara, Juvenile Justice Center
 David Langdon, Functional Family Therapy, Juvenile Justice Center
 Todd Saliszold, Cornell Cooperative Extension Youth Development
 Fran Ricci, Schenectady Job Training Agency

Focus Group IV: Prevention Providers

Kate Houghton, Probation
 Mark Silvestri, JD Intake
 Dennis Stapf, JD Intake Supervisor
 Susan Schaffer, Department of Social Services
 Dr. Nina Singh, Psychologist, Juvenile Justice Center
 Laura Coombs, Juvenile Drug Court
 David Mathis, Probation
 Lynee Wilson, Probation Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program

Focus Group V: Parents Group (Coalition for Parents that Care)

Marcia Marian
 Nicholas Marian
 Brenda K. Nikon
 Frederic Lee

Darlene Lee
 Rev. Van Stuart
 Terry A. McDooyield
 Colleen Williams
 Melanie Gardner
 John J. Rudzianski Jr.
 Regina Jenkins
 Olivia Adams
 Chris Bobbitt
 Jacqueline Thomas
 Marie Bobbitt
 Connie Richardson (JCEC Advisory Board Member)
 Michael Eidens (JCEC Advisory Board Chairperson)

Focus Group VI: Community Stakeholders

Clarence Stafford, Jr., Boys and Girls Club of Schenectady
 Judy Atchison, Quest, Inc.
 Beautiful Life Allah, Quest, Inc.
 Shacreesha Ginyard, Quest, Inc.
 Gregory Fields, Community Outreach Specialist, Schenectady City Schools
 A.C. Mazurek, Carver Community Center
 Ron Wood, Schenectady County Gang Prevention Specialist, Youth Bureau
 Grace Ashline, Youth Advocacy Program
 Joseph Skinner, Youth Advocacy Program
 Lynee Wilson, Probation

Focus Group VII: Youth from the Schenectady Job Training Center

A group of approximately 12 youths aged 15 to 17 participated in this group discussion. All participants have been involved with the Job Training Program. The group included two girls and approximately ten boys from this program.

Focus Group VIII: Youth from the Capital District Evening Reporting Center

A group of five youths who are residents of Albany and Schenectady and ranged in age from 14 to 19 years old participated in this discussion. All participants were involved with the Capital District Evening Reporting Center. This group included 1 girl and 4 boys.

Individual Interviews:

A.C. (Budd) Muzurek, Executive Director, Carver Center
 Jamie Goyette, Schenectady Schools Attendance Officer
 Laura Velez, Director of Services, Department of Social Services
 Michael Seber, Assistant Chief of Police, City of Schenectady
 Jo Anne Assini, Schenectady County Family Court Judge
 Robin Boyd, SPOA for Schenectady County Community Services
 Darlene and Fred Lee, Weed and Seed Program Sub-Committee Chairs

APPENDIX G: PRIORITY AREAS

Priority Area 1: Community Building— Enhance neighborhood and community vitality and create opportunities for greater involvement in, and commitment to, community life by children, youth and families

- ❖ **Foster community expectations and standards**—“the moral voice of the community”— that frown upon/discourage delinquent behavior and violence among both adults and youth
- ❖ **Build and sustain strong neighborhood infrastructures** through collaborations among formal and informal organizations including youth development programs, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, police, and others. As part of this process, support and expand existing effective neighborhood revitalization programs such as Weed & Seed and Schenectady’s Promise
- ❖ **Promote civic pride and civic engagement among young people** by increasing volunteer opportunities, expanding adult-youth and older youth mentoring programs, and other youth involvement strategies
- ❖ **Work with the media to highlight Schenectady’s strengths** and positive community developments/achievements in order to change perceptions about the City – ex. Public ad campaign focusing on the importance of each individual’s contribution to making Schenectady a great place to live and work
- ❖ **Support and hold communal community activities** such as neighborhood block parties, community fairs, international dinners, neighborhood fund-raisers, special events, athletic leagues, etc.
- ❖ **Augment community policing and other law enforcement intervention initiatives** designed to create a safe, constructive environment in which to undertake community building efforts
- ❖ **Target efforts** in the most at-risk, high population density neighborhoods such as Hamilton Hill/Vale and Mount Pleasant
- ❖ **Increase and encourage leadership opportunities for parents and community residents** so that they can take more active roles in the lives of their children and community, e.g. leadership and civic training programs and community focus groups and dialogues

Priority Area 2: Parent Responsibility/Family Support Services— Adopt holistic, family centered strategies designed to help break the intergenerational cycle of delinquency, violence, and dependence and increase parental accountability

- ❖ **Design family-centered (treating the family as a unit) prevention, intervention, and treatment programs**, recognizing that children and youth will do better when services are provided within the context of their families

- ❖ For youth who are at high-risk of entering or are involved in the juvenile justice system, **adopt policies and practices that promote parental accountability** and mandate greater parental responsibility for their children's actions
- ❖ **Develop an ongoing parent engagement campaign** including coalition development and media publicity designed to motivate, engage and support parents and their parental roles
- ❖ **Develop or increase the availability of parent education and support programs** for parents with both young children and adolescents in a variety of settings, including schools, community centers, and provider organizations
- ❖ **Expand the availability of evidence-based programs** such as FFT and YAP that are designed to engage youths and their families in positive change and prevent relapses of negative behavior
- ❖ **Provide a better range of services to support parents and families** in their role as primary caregiver such as day care, family literacy and others, with an increased focus on engaging fathers more actively in their children's lives
- ❖ **Promote the formation of parent-to-parent support groups** designed to create a support network for children in the community and to increase parents skills and capacity to raise their own children
- ❖ **Work with schools, community based providers, and civic organizations to create specific roles and responsibilities that increase parental leadership and engagement**, including participation on boards and committees, volunteer positions, mentoring opportunities, etc.

Priority Area 3: Youth Service Continuum— Help children and youth succeed by supporting them early, providing services to build their skills and capacities, and fully supporting those involved in the juvenile justice system

Early Intervention

- ❖ **Identify and target prevention services toward at-risk elementary age children** whose family dynamics and/or personal behavior make them more vulnerable to eventual involvement with the juvenile justice system
- ❖ **Provide or extend early intervention and prevention services to elementary age children** in a variety of settings, especially schools and community centers
- ❖ **Increase access to early intervention services for families with infants and toddlers**, such as the nurse home visitation program

Youth Development

- ❖ **Develop more career and vocational education and training programs** for both middle school and high school students
- ❖ **Expand the availability (e.g. number of programs, hours, duration) of a variety of youth development services** ranging from after school and recreational programs to summer employment and job placement opportunities

- ❖ **Provide a wide range of age-appropriate structured activities with positive adult role models** that engage the interests of all youth, including mentoring and tutoring programs
- ❖ **Create a centrally located youth community center/shelter** to support youth development activities and provide a safe haven for at-risk children
- ❖ **Design and target prevention and intervention services for girls** engaging in violent and/or delinquent behavior who are at high risk of entering the juvenile justice system
- ❖ **Incorporate and reorient issue specific prevention programs** (ex. teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and alcohol) into broader, more systemic youth development strategies and approaches
- ❖ **To the extent possible, create and implement a set of common behavioral guidelines for youth development programs** to encourage positive behavior among youth and provide tangible consequences for unacceptable behavior

Probation and Aftercare

- ❖ **Increase the capacity of the Juvenile Justice Center and DSS-Probation Collaboration** to respond to increased demand for their services and to maintain their high success rate in diverting PINS/JDs from Family Court proceedings
- ❖ **Augment aftercare planning** to facilitate reentry (and ongoing treatment) of youth returning from placement back into their families and community

Priority Area 4: Coordination, Quality, and Accountability— Increase collaboration, communication, and quality control among youth service providers including local government agencies, non-profit organizations, schools, and charities to make better use of existing resources and enhance the effectiveness of services

- ❖ **Create collaborative agreements among neighborhood service providers** to enable programs to offer those services and supports that they are best equipped to provide (ex. Boys and Girls Club and Carver Community Center)
- ❖ **Expand or develop truancy prevention and abatement** strategies/programs that involve parents, schools, DSS, DOP, and police
- ❖ **Enhance the quality of juvenile service provision** by moving toward an outcome-based framework to systematically evaluate the quality and effectiveness of service programs and utilizing research-based best practice models to shape future service provision strategies
- ❖ **Create ongoing mechanisms to increase communication and collaboration** among County and community agencies that serve youth, such as task forces, an annual “juvenile systems summit,” interdepartmental policy review committees, etc.
- ❖ **Work with schools to review school suspension policies** to seek alternatives that are more flexible, keep children in school, and better promote academic achievement
- ❖ **Promote stronger collaboration between Police, Probation, and other juvenile justice agencies**, since the Police can serve as an “early warning system” to identify potential delinquents and actively support Probation in its juvenile justice activities

- ❖ **Increase awareness of the range of services and supports** available through the juvenile justice system among service providers, schools, and the public at large
- ❖ **Promote communication among provider agencies** to reduce overlapping and duplication of services and implement coordinated service plans for families and youth in need
- ❖ **Redirect resources to expand efforts that have a proven track record** in addressing delinquent and at-risk behavior, including school resource officers (SRO), BOCES Step Program, ROC Program, CAT and JAT teams, and Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- ❖ **Take steps to increase diversity and cultural responsiveness** in organizations providing services to youth and families