



Madera County Probation Department
Stop Truancy Opportunity Program
Annual Performance Report
2005-2006

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**Madera County
Probation Department
Stop Truancy
Opportunity Program
(STOP)**

**Annual
Performance
Report**

07/01/05 – 06/30/06

Summary

The Stop Truancy Opportunity Program (STOP) completed its sixth year of operation beginning on July 1, 2005 and ending on June 30, 2006. The eight participating Madera County Schools include Dairyland Elementary, Enterprise Secondary, Martin Luther King Junior High, North Fork Elementary, Oak Creek Intermediate, Ranchos Middle School, Thomas Jefferson Junior High and Wilson Middle School.

I. Participant Demographics

By the end of the 2005-2006 school year the total student population tracked by STOP was reported at 268 participants, a 12.7% increase from the 234 total participating students reported at mid-year. Of the 268 students reported, students from Martin Luther King and Thomas Jefferson combined made up about half of the STOP population, while smaller schools such as Dairyland accounted for less than 5% of the population.

**Table 1.
Total Participants by School at Mid-Year and Year-End**

| Participating Schools | Mid-Year | Percent | Year-End | Percent |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Dairyland Elementary | 2 | 0.9% | 9 | 3.4% |
| Enterprise Secondary | 4 | 1.7% | 10 | 3.7% |
| Martin Luther King Jr. High | 97 | 41.5% | 110 | 41.0% |
| North Fork Elementary | 18 | 7.7% | 18 | 6.7% |
| Oak Creek Intermediate | 30 | 12.8% | 30 | 11.2% |
| Ranchos Middle School | 4 | 1.7% | 6 | 2.2% |
| Thomas Jefferson Jr. High | 58 | 24.8% | 59 | 22.0 % |
| Wilson Middle | 21 | 9.0% | 26 | 9.7% |
| Total | 234 | 100.0% | 268 | 100.0% |

During the 2005-2006 performance period over half of the 268 STOP participants were reported as Hispanic (29.1%) or Non-Hispanic White (22.8%). A large percentage of students (45.5%) did not disclose their ethnicity. The population of STOP participants was fairly equal by gender; 50.4% of participants were males and 49.6% were females.

Table 2.
Ethnic Background of Total Participants by School

| Participating Schools | African American | Asian | Hispanic | Native American | Non – Hispanic White | Not Reported | Total Annual |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------|----------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Dairyland | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 9 |
| Enterprise | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 10 |
| Martin Luther King | 1 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 96 | 110 |
| North Fork | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 18 |
| Oak Creek | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 24 | 4 | 30 |
| Ranchos Middle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Thomas Jefferson | 1 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 59 |
| Wilson | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 26 |
| Total | 5 | 0 | 78 | 2 | 61 | 122 | 268 |
| Percent | 1.9% | 0% | 29.1% | 0.7% | 22.8% | 45.5% | 100% |

Table 3.
Gender of Total Participants by School

| Participating Schools | Female | Male | Total Annual |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| Dairyland | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Enterprise | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Martin Luther King | 60 | 50 | 110 |
| North Fork | 8 | 10 | 18 |
| Oak Creek | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| Ranchos Middle | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Thomas Jefferson | 34 | 25 | 59 |
| Wilson | 12 | 14 | 26 |
| Total | 133 | 135 | 268 |
| Percent | 49.6% | 50.4% | 100% |

II. Program Statistics

The program placed two participants on probation for truancy offenses this past school year. These participants made up less than 1% of the total participant population (n = 268). One of the participants (0.4%) violated their terms of probation, and one participant was successful in completing their probation. Each of these occurred during the first semester of the school year.

During the 2005-2006 school year none of the STOP participants received court ordered restitution or community service.

A total of 100 (37.3%) participants completed the program by the end of this school year. Those who did not proceed left due to reasons listed in Table 6.

**Table 4.
Probation Status by Semester (n = 268)**

| | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | | Total Annual | |
|---|------------|------|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Number | Rate | Number | Rate | Number | Rate |
| Placed on probation for truancy offense | 2 | 0.7% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 0.7% |
| Violated terms of current probation | 1 | 0.4% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 0.4% |
| Completed probation | 1 | 0.4% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 0.4% |

**Table 5.
Restitution and Community Service Status by Semester (n = 268)**

| | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | | Total Annual | |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Number | Rate | Number | Rate | Number | Rate |
| Given court ordered restitution | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Successfully completed restitution | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Given court ordered community service | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Successfully completed community service | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |

**Table 6.
Reasons for Leaving the Program by Semester (n = 268)**

| | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | | Total Annual | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Number | Rate | Number | Rate | Number | Rate |
| Completed the Program | 16 | 6.0% | 84 | 31.3% | 100 | 37.3% |
| Moved to another city or state | 10 | 3.7% | 30 | 11.2% | 40 | 14.9% |
| Transferred to another school | 9 | 3.4% | 10 | 3.7% | 19 | 7.1% |
| 602 W & I, wards | 7 | 2.6% | 10 | 3.7% | 17 | 6.3% |
| Other | 19 | 7.1% | 2 | 0.7% | 21 | 7.8% |
| Total | 61 | 22.8% | 136 | 50.7% | 207 | 77.2% |

The program annually tracks participants' arrest, incarceration and probation violation rates, while specifically identifying if a participant's arrests, incarcerations, or probation violation occurred before or after referral for STOP participation. Tables 7 and 8 show participants' annual arrest and incarceration rates grouped by semester.

The increase in the arrest and incarceration rates can be attributed to the intensified supervision of the participants by program officers as the school year progressed. The arrest and incarceration rates are low in comparison to rates at the County level. The increase in these rates for post-referral STOP participants can be viewed as the results of positive intervention and prevention services being administered to deter further truancy and crime among this group of juveniles.

Table 7.
Arrest Rates Prior to and After STOP Referral By Type of Offense (n = 268)

| Offense Type | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | | Total Annual | |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Number | Rate | Number | Rate | Number | Rate |
| Arrested prior to STOP referral | | | | | | |
| Status offense | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0.4% | 1 | 0.4% |
| Felony offense | 2 | 0.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 0.7% |
| Misdemeanor offense | 5 | 1.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 1.9% |
| Total | 7 | 2.6% | 1 | 0.4% | 8 | 3.0% |
| Arrested after STOP referral | | | | | | |
| Status offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Felony offense | 3 | 1.1% | 4 | 1.5% | 7 | 2.6% |
| Misdemeanor offense | 3 | 1.1% | 1 | 0.4% | 4 | 1.5% |
| Total | 6 | 2.2% | 5 | 1.9% | 11 | 4.1% |

Table 8.
Incarceration Rates Prior to and After STOP Referral By Type of Offense (n = 268)

| Offense Type | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | | Annual | |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|--------|------|
| | Number | Rate | Number | Rate | Number | Rate |
| Incarcerated prior to STOP referral | | | | | | |
| Status offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Felony offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Misdemeanor offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Incarcerated after STOP referral | | | | | | |
| Status offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Felony offense | 2 | 0.7% | 3 | 1.1% | 5 | 1.9% |
| Misdemeanor offense | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 2 | 0.7% | 3 | 1.1% | 5 | 1.9% |

STOP utilizes a step sequence to determine students' level of truancy. At **Step 1** (students' initial *STOP* referral) the student has 1 to 3 unexcused absences and a letter is sent to the parents notifying them of the student's truant behavior. **Step 2** indicates that the student incurred a fourth unexcused absence, at which time another notification is mailed to the parents. A meeting between the probation officer, the parents, and a school official soon follows. **Step 3** indicates a fifth unexcused absence occurred and a third letter of notification is mailed to the parents by the District Attorney. A compulsory Truancy Mediation Team Meeting is scheduled for students and parents to attend. **Step 4** indicates a sixth unexcused absence occurred and a School Attendance Review Board (SARB) meeting is held. **Step 5** (the final step) indicates that a seventh unexcused absence occurred. The student is referred to court as a habitual truant and formal probation is requested.

Student data were analyzed to determine the number of participants reaching each step in the aforementioned sequence. Students reported as actively enrolled in the *STOP* program at mid-year ($n = 173$) and at year-end ($n = 163$) were included in these analyses. Data were not matched for these cases. Figure 1 illustrates the results listed in Table 9.

Figure 1.
Percentage of Active Participants at each Truancy Level at Mid-Year and Year-End

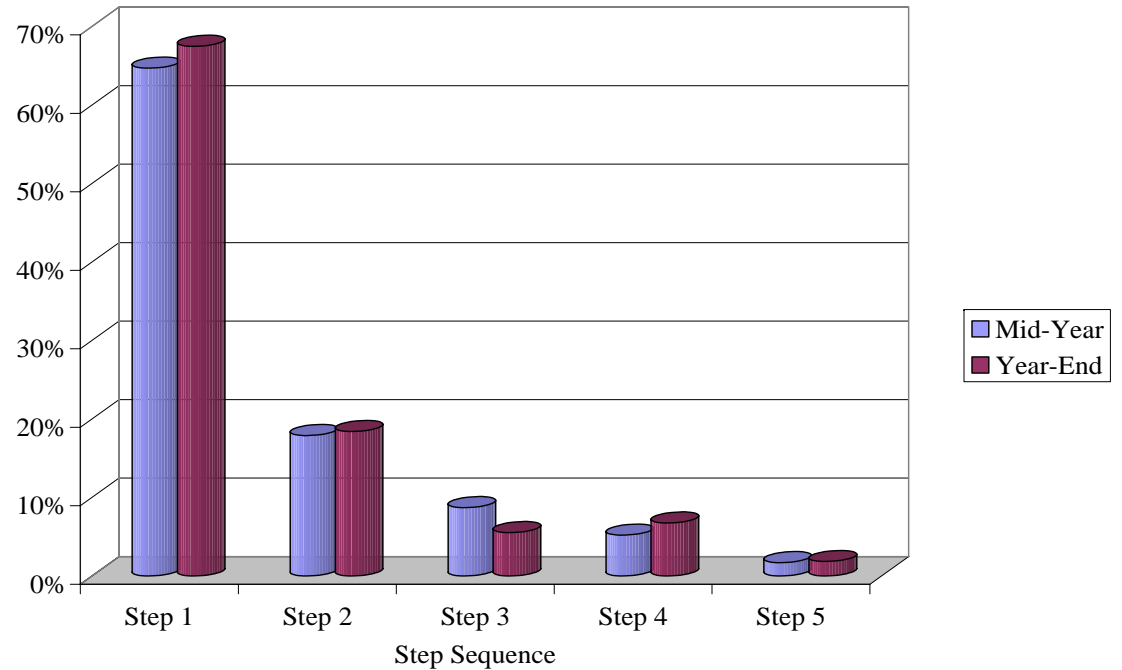


Table 9.
Participants at Each Truancy Level at Mid-Year and Year-End

| Steps | Mid-Year ($n = 173$) | | Year-End ($n = 163$) | |
|-------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 112 | 64.7% | 110 | 67.5% |
| 2 | 31 | 17.9% | 30 | 18.4% |
| 3 | 15 | 8.7% | 9 | 5.5% |
| 4 | 9 | 5.2% | 11 | 6.7% |
| 5 | 7 | 4.4% | 3 | 1.8% |

III. Academic Performance and Behavior

At the time of this annual report, 268 STOP participants were on file. However, academic and attendance data were not available for all participants due to the movement of participants in and out of program schools. Of those active participants with data available at both mid-year and year-end ($n = 155$), school attendance rates reported a marginal increase of 2% between the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semester (see Table 10). The mean of grade point averages (GPA) for STOP participants was 0.83 at the end of the Fall 2005 semester, and increased to 1.56 by the end of the Spring 2006 semester. (Note: Participant data were matched at mid-year and year-end to include only those participants who had GPA and attendance rates at the end of both the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. Therefore, the **STOP Mid-Year 2005-2006 Report** reflects different GPA and attendance rates than the current report.)

Table 10.
Mean Grade Point Averages (GPA) and Attendance Rates per Semester by School

| Participating Schools | Sample Size | Mean GPA | | | Attendance Rate | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| | | Sem 1 | Sem 2 | +/- | Sem 1 | Sem 2 | +/- |
| Dairyland | $n = 2$ | 2.50 | 3.00 | +0.50 | 0.97 | 0.94 | -0.03 |
| Enterprise | $n = 2$ | 0.33 | 1.00 | +0.67 | 0.77 | 0.78 | +0.01 |
| Martin Luther King | $n = 82$ | 0.81 | 1.81 | +1.00 | 0.88 | 0.91 | +0.03 |
| North Fork | $n = 3$ | 1.11 | 2.44 | +1.33 | 0.86 | 0.92 | +0.06 |
| Oak Creek | $n = 5$ | 1.33 | 1.00 | -0.33 | 0.94 | 0.88 | -0.06 |
| Ranchos Middle | $n = 2$ | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.87 | 0.57 | -0.30 |
| Thomas Jefferson | $n = 43$ | 0.88 | 1.40 | +0.52 | 0.85 | 0.90 | +0.05 |
| Wilson | $n = 16$ | 0.54 | 0.78 | +0.24 | 0.85 | 0.81 | -0.04 |
| Total | $n = 155$ | 0.83 | 1.56 | +0.73 | 0.87 | 0.89 | +0.02 |

To measure STOP participants' behavior, the program tracked the number of students suspended and the total days of suspension by the end of Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. Only those students who had data available for the entire school year and were active participants at year-end (n=155) were included in this analysis. A total of 43 students were suspended in Fall 2005 for a total of 175 days. The average length of suspension per suspended participant was 4.17 days. At the end of the Spring 2006 semester, a total of 20 students were suspended, a 55% decline from Fall 2005 semester. These students averaged 6.5 days of suspension per suspended participant, for a total of 130 days during the Spring semester.

The total number of participants suspended and the total number of days suspended decreased from Fall to Spring. Previous investigations revealed that some suspended students were placed on extended suspension because school administration had deemed the student ready for school expulsion. However, only the school board had authority to approve expulsion of a student. Since the school board convened infrequently, some students facing expulsion were placed on continued suspension, remaining at home until expulsion procedures were completed thus increasing the total numbers of suspended days.

Table 11.
Number of Students Suspended and Total Days of Suspension per Semester by School

| Participating Schools | Sample Size | Semester 1 | | Semester 2 | |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | | Number of Students | Number of Days | Number of Students | Number of Days |
| Dairyland | n = 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Enterprise | n = 2 | 2 | 27 | 1 | 7 |
| Martin Luther King | n = 82 | 23 | 67 | 10 | 57 |
| North Fork | n = 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oak Creek | n = 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 11 |
| Ranchos Middle | n = 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 14 |
| Thomas Jefferson | n = 43 | 9 | 41 | 4 | 22 |
| Wilson | n = 16 | 4 | 29 | 2 | 19 |
| Total | n = 155 | 42 | 175 | 20 | 130 |

IV. Additional Services

Participants’ backgrounds are of additional importance when determining the impact STOP potentially had in the lives of the participants the program served. *Table 12 indicates STOP participants’ involvement with other programs and services. Of the 268 STOP participants, 158 students (59%) were involved in one or more of these services. Ninety-five participants (35.4%) were referred to the STOP tutoring program, which may have affected the increase in the mean of grade point averages reported in the previous section. The year prior to this reporting period witnessed a large decline in mean grade point averages and fewer students participated in the STOP tutoring program.*

Table 12. Students Participating in Other Programs and Services by School

| Program / Service | Dairyland | Enterprise | MLK | North Fork | Oak Creek | Ranchos Middle | Thomas Jefferson | Wilson | Total | Percent |
|--|------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 32 | 11.9% |
| Cal-Learn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.4% |
| Referred to Mountain Area Clinicians | 0 | 0 | 2 | 15 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 11.6% |
| Referred to Madera Co. Clinicians | 0 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 24 | 9.0 % |
| Referred to STOP Tutoring | 0 | 4 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 95 | 35.4% |
| Referred to Boys and Girls Club | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 9.7% |
| Received 1 or more of the above services | 5 | 6 | 46 | 15 | 25 | 0 | 54 | 7 | 158 | 59.0% |
| Sample Size | 9 | 10 | 110 | 18 | 30 | 6 | 59 | 26 | 268 | 100.0% |

V. Conclusion

The 2005-2006 school year witnessed a similar enrollment of 234 students compared to the previous year's enrollment of 226 program participants. The program continues to demonstrate success in curbing the trend of truancy that was very evident prior to the implementation of the STOP program in 2001. The program encountered some slight staffing problems due to the leaving of one staff member without warning, which caused some disruption to services within that caseload. Another staff member took unplanned medical leave, which caused some disruption until a replacement could be assigned. Overall, services were much improved over last year despite the staffing issues. The STOP Tutoring Program was again implemented at the two local junior high schools. After some initial staffing problems were resolved, the program proved to be very worthwhile and effective in helping the STOP students improve their knowledge and understanding of their homework assignments, which in turn improved their grades.

A review of the statistical data continues to indicate the effectiveness of the program. After the initial contact with the STOP probation officer, most of the participants remained at Step One or Step Two of the program's continuum of steps. This represents a curtailment of the truant behavior at the initial stages of the program. As indicated in previous annual reports, the tangible success of the program cannot be measured only by statistical data, but rather by the evident changes observed in the lives of the youth and the families the program serves. Each year the program staff has the privilege of assisting families in the realization of their value and dignity, and that their lives can be meaningful through active participation in the community, which most certainly and importantly includes their schools.

At a recent meeting of the STOP Multidisciplinary Team, the Madera Unified District Attendance Officer/SARB Director emphasized the continuing decline in the truancy rates for

students in the junior high schools in the Madera Unified School District. He directly attributed the decline to the success of the STOP program and the intervention of the STOP probation officers, the STOP tutoring program, and school intervention personnel. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thomas Jefferson Junior High Schools' Outreach Consultants also related the importance of the STOP staff on campus. They noted that not only were truancy issues addressed, but other students came forward with other issues that had not previously been reported as a result of relationships built between staff and students. Problem areas such as bullying, criminal activity, and discipline are now being addressed throughout the schools with much more positive results.

As we have continued to meet the problem of truancy at the 7th and 8th grade levels at our eight participating school, we have evolved and changed with the times. We have learned to approach truant students differently than in the past. We have come to appreciate that the central issues affecting these students usually run much deeper than truancy. Rather than focusing only on the lack of attendance, we now ask students about what's happening with them personally, at school, and at home. This thoughtful approach has been much more successful in understanding the difficulties wayward students experience in their lives. As a program, we have learned that truancy is most often a symptom of a problem, and that solutions are as varied as the individual students we serve. We believe we are making an impact: one student and one family at a time. The STOP program continues to be successful and we look forward to helping those in need redirect their lives and become the young men and women they have the potential to be.

Madera County Probation Department



Stop Truancy Opportunity Program

The Probation Department appreciates the Madera County Board of Supervisors' continued support of the program. Collaboratively, the Board, the Behavior Health Services Department, the Probation Department, the county schools, the District Attorney's Office, the Harry H. Baker Boys and Girls Club, and the Department of Social Services have made this program successful. Our partners in this endeavor are integral constituents in the triumph over truancy in the eight schools STOP services in Madera County.

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