UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Evaluation of a school-based restorative justice program for drug-related disciplinary incidents

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in

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis Approval Page iii

Table of Contents iv

List of Abbreviations vi

List of Tables vii

List of Figures viii

Acknowledgments ix

Abstract of the Thesis x

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
1.1 Background 1
1.1.1 Alcohol Use 2
1.1.2 Tobacco Use 3
1.1.3 Marijuana Use 4
1.1.4 California Department of Education Response 5
1.1.5 Disciplinary Incidents in California's Schools 6
1.2 Literature Review 8
1.2.1 Restorative practices: An Alternative to Punitive Measures 8
1.2.2 Evaluating Restorative Practice Programs 8
1.2.3 Findings from RJP Program Evaluations 11
1.3 Current Case: Nevada County, California 13
1.3.1 Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions (RAYS) 14
1.4 Study Objectives 18

Chapter 2: Methods 20
2.1 Background 20
2.2 Data Sources 20
2.2.1 Activity Log Database 20
2.2.2 Case Management Database 21
2.2.3 Pretest and Posttest Surveys 22
2.2.4 Discipline Data 23
2.3 Statistical Analysis 24

Chapter 3: Results 26
3.1 Sample Characteristics 26
3.2 Activity Logs and Cases 28
3.3 Pretest and Posttest Findings 31
3.3.1 Self-responsibility 31
3.3.2 Self-reported Substance Use 32

3.3.3 Perceptions of Substance Use 33
3.3.4 Awareness of Resources 33
3.3.5 Experience in RAYS Program 34
3.4 Suspension Counts 37
3.5 Implementation Fidelity 39

Chapter 4: Discussion 41
4.1 Summary of Findings 41
4.2 Comparison to Previous Restorative Program Evaluations 42
4.2.1 Individual-level Impacts 42
4.2.2 Changes in Discipline Landscape 45
4.2.3 Implementation Fidelity 48
4.3 Strengths and Limitations 49

Chapter 5: Conclusion 53
5.1 Closing Comments 53

Appendix 55

References 58

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOD	Alcohol and Other Drug
BSCC	Board of State and Community Corrections
CDE	California Department of Education
LEP	Local Evaluation Plan
MTF	Monitoring the Future
NCSOS	Nevada County Superintendent of Schools
RAYS	Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions
RJP	Restorative Justice Practices
SUD	Substance Use and Drug
TUPE	Tobacco Use Prevention Education
UCSD	University of California, San Diego

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographics of students enrolled in RAYS between August 2021 and January 2023 26

Table 2: Referral types and reasons for RAYS enrollments from August 2021 to January 2023 27

Table 3: Types of substances students were caught in possession of or using 28

Table 4: RAYS activities implemented from August 2021 to January 2023 30

Table 5: Proportion of students who strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with statements on self-responsibility 32

Table 6: Proportion of students who reported using a substance in the last 30 days 32

Table 7: Proportion of students who believed using each substance EVERY DAY is very harmful or extremely harmful 33

Table 8: Proportion of students who somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with statements on resource awareness 34

Table 9: Proportion of students who somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with statements about their experience in the RAYS program 35

Table 10: Completion statuses of students who exited RAYS from August 2021 to January 2023 40

Table 11: RAYS program goals and objectives 55

Table 12: RAYS process evaluation measures 56

Table 13: RAYS outcome evaluation measures 57

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Drug-related suspensions in California schools from 2011-12 to 2021-22 7

Figure 2: Flowchart of steps in the RAYS enrollment and exit processes 18

Figure 3: Total number of suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools 38

Figure 4: Total number of drug-related suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools 39

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Evaluation of a school-based restorative justice program for drug-related disciplinary incidents

by

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Professor Shu-Hong Zhu, Chair

Background: School systems across the United States have begun implementing restorative justice practices (RJPs) to address disciplinary incidents. Previous research has found these alternatives to be effective in reducing the number of re-offenses and improving overall school connectedness, climate, and individual behavioral outcomes among students. However,

there is limited research assessing the advantage of using these approaches to address drug-related incidents specifically.

Objective: The aim of this study is to report findings from an intermediate evaluation of an RJP program with substance use intervention components in a rural school system. Measures of interest include changes in enrollee substance use behaviors and harm perceptions, self-responsibility, resource awareness, and the count of overall and drug-related suspensions.

Methods: Data from pretest and posttest surveys, activity logs, a case management database, and publicly available discipline data were extracted and analyzed to inform the assessment of changes in individual behavioral and discipline landscape outcomes.

Results: Most enrollees reported a decrease in substance use and increased resource awareness. Furthermore, decreases in the number of overall and drug-related suspensions were noted at schools implementing the restorative program.

Conclusion: Findings from this intermediate evaluation reveal promising insight into the program's effectiveness in addressing adolescent substance use behaviors and the disciplinary landscape. Nonetheless, further research is needed to examine the program-specific advantages of RJPs versus traditional punitive measures (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) to address drug-related disciplinary incidents.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Adolescent illicit drug use is a top concern for school systems in the United States as early onset of use can have detrimental effects on academic performance and overall health outcomes.[1] Overall, adolescent alcohol and other drug (AOD) use rates have steadily declined across the years. In 2011, 14.7% of 8th graders, 31.1% of 10th graders, and 40% of 12th graders reported last 12-month AOD use.[2] Most recently in 2021, 10.2% of 8th graders, 18.7% of 10th graders, and 32% of 12th graders reported last 12-month AOD use.[2] Despite these decreasing trends, it is crucial that schools and systems working closely with adolescents and pre-pubescent children remain vigilant in their substance use prevention and intervention efforts.

The California Department of Education (CDE) highlights the important role of schools in providing assistance programs for students to prevent or intervene on risky behaviors, like substance use.[3] In an effort to address this, school systems have begun to implement alternative to suspension programs which is reflected in the expansion of restorative intervention programs to address disciplinary incidents.[4,5] These programs have been found to be effective in reducing the number of incidents, improving school climate, and increasing academic success.[5] Although the implementation of these programs is increasing, evaluative research to assess the effectiveness of such alternatives is limited. Furthermore, few if any of these programs, to our knowledge, provide substance use-specific services, such as substance use and drug (SUD) treatment and counseling, for students who have committed drug-related offenses.

The purpose of this project is to report findings from an intermediate evaluation of Nevada County's Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions (RAYS) program. This evaluation seeks to assess potential program impacts on student AOD use behaviors, perceptions of AOD

use, resource awareness, self-responsibility, and overall and drug related suspension counts at sites implementing the program. The focus will be on alcohol, vapes (with nicotine or just flavoring), and marijuana as the program being evaluated specifically addresses use of these substances in core educational and counseling intervention components. Findings from this evaluative report may be used to inform a formal evaluation of the RAYS program and contribute to limited research on school-based, restorative alternatives to suspension for drug-related disciplinary incidents.

1.1.1 Alcohol Use

Trends in alcohol use among adolescents in the United States have followed similar patterns to other substances; however, specific use behaviors, mainly binge drinking, have steadily increased in recent years.[6] Among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders at the national level, 8.2%, 18.6%, and 30.2%, respectively, reported past 30-day alcohol use in 2018.[6] When asked about binge drinking behaviors, which the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey defines as having 5 or more drinks in a row in the past two weeks, 3.7% of 8th graders, 8.7% of 10th graders, and 13.8% of 12th graders reported binge drinking in 2018.[6] More recently, the rates for binge drinking were at 2.2%, 5.9%, and 12.6% for each respective grade level in 2022.[6] Nonetheless, the proportion of adolescents who reported past 30-day alcohol use has slightly decreased in recent years, while binge drinking has stabilized. Findings from the 2022 wave of the MTF revealed that 6.0%, 13.6%, and 28.4% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, respectively, reported past 30-day alcohol use, with similar proportions of these age groups reported for previous MTF survey waves.[6]

1.1.2 Tobacco Use

The use of combustible tobacco products has significantly decreased with 2.2% of 8th, 4.2% of 10th, and 7.6% of 12th graders (referred to as "school-aged adolescents" hereinafter) reporting past 30-day cigarette use in 2018.[2] These rates have continued to drop to 0.8%, 1.7%, and 4.0% for each grade level, respectively, in 2022.[2] Nationally, this particular group of adolescents reported a combined past 30-day cigarette use rate of 2.1%.[6] In California, which is known for having some of the strictest anti-tobacco laws in the nation, only 1.2% of this population reported past 30-day cigarette use in 2021.[7] Other combustible forms of tobacco have also been relatively low across the years with the prevalence of large cigars and little cigars/cigarillos remaining below 10% across the years, more recently below 2% for either product.[6] Smokeless tobacco (e.g., snuff, chew, snus) use has also remained on a steady decline with 3.4% of adolescents reporting past 30-day use in 2018 to 2.3% in 2021.[6] Looking at California specifically, only 0.6% of adolescents said that they had used a smokeless tobacco product in the last 30 days in 2021.[7] Nonetheless, previous research has noted that smokeless tobacco use remains high in niche populations, mainly among non-Hispanic White male individuals who reside in rural areas.[8]

Driving the steady increase in overall tobacco use rates among adolescents are electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes"). These devices are used to vaporize nicotine-containing liquids and other chemical compounds, allowing for the inhalation of chemical vapors. In 2018, 19.2% of school-aged adolescents reported having vaped in the last 30 days, increasing to 22.5% in 2019 followed by a slight decrease to 17.0% in 2022.[6] In California specifically, 8.2% of school-aged adolescents reported past 30-day use of a vape product.[7] These high use rates are often attributed to the various flavors available for vape "juices" (nicotine containing liquids which are vaporized

and inhaled using e-cigarette devices) which may be enticing to school-aged youth.[9] Findings released from the 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey reported that among the middle and high schoolers who used a vape in the last 30 days, approximately 85% used a flavored product with fruit and candy or sweet flavors being the most popular.[10]

1.1.3 Marijuana Use

Despite its status as a Schedule I substance under the federal Controlled Substances Act, several states across the nation have implemented policies permitting medicinal and/or recreational use of cannabis products. Some states have even gone the extra step of decriminalizing marijuana possession and use in an effort to reform the criminal justice system's procedures surrounding cannabis. Adolescent cannabis use in particular, which remains illegal for individuals under 21 years of age in California, has seen fluctuations across the years.

Overall rates of past 30-day use of marijuana/hashish products among school-aged adolescents in the United States were at 14.6% in 2018, followed by a slight decrease to 11.0% in 2021, and is now at 12.3% as of 2022.[6] Past 30-day marijuana vaping, as a modality, has increased among this population from 5.7% in 2018, to 10.1% in 2021, and current rates standing at 9.6% as of 2022.[6] Marijuana use rates in California, a state that legalized medicinal use in 1996 and recreational use in 2016, have increased among school-aged adolescents. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 31.2% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in California reported ever-using cannabis products, with 15% reporting past 30-day use.[7] The most commonly used modalities for marijuana use among students in California were smoking at 50.6% among current users, followed by vaping at 32.6%.[7]

1.1.4 California Department of Education Response

Current California Education Code stipulates that all suspensions and expulsions are warranted if a student commits a "violent crime, possesses/uses drugs or weapons, steals, bullies, hazes, behaves obscenely, threatens to cause physical harm, or damages school property".[11] The decision to suspend or expel a student who has committed a suspendable offense is at the discretion of the principal or district superintendent. Since the 1980's, most policies and guidelines surrounding discipline in California's schools have been punitive in nature, with zero-tolerance approaches being the norm. However, a shift to more restorative disciplinary methods has been seen in various districts not only in California, but throughout the United States.[12,13]

For drug-related disciplinary policies in particular, California Education Code states that students may be suspended or expelled if they are caught in possession, using, selling, furnishing, or under the influence of any controlled substance under Division 10 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC).[11,14] Controlled substances listed under this code include any forms of opiates, opium derivatives, hallucinogenic substances (e.g., cannabis-derived products such as tetrahydrocannabinols), depressants, and other "hard" drugs (e.g., cocaine, heroin). The current California Education Code also classifies possession or use of tobacco products (e.g., cigarettes, vapes) or alcohol as a suspendable offense.[11]

Nonetheless, a recent announcement from the California Department of Education (CDE) instituted new guidelines for what may constitute a suspendable incident.[15] Although policies for drug-related offenses remain in effect, guidelines for suspensions and expulsions for defiance-related infractions have shifted. Students in grades K-8 can no longer be suspended for "willful defiance", defined as being disruptive or acting in a way that defies authority. Research has found that punitive measures to address willful defiance have historically impacted students of

color and sexual/gender minorities at disproportionate rates.[15] State officials have emphasized that punitive measures such as suspension should be considered as a last resort, instead diverting students to necessary services and interventions as alternatives to suspension.[15]

These policies highlight a major transition from punitive measures (e.g., at-home suspensions) which are more exclusionary in nature and tend to isolate students. The "alternative to suspension" approaches currently being proposed seek to improve behavioral and academic outcomes utilizing restorative justice and trauma-informed approaches. They also seek to provide individualized support in lieu of punitive discipline by providing additional academic, behavioral (counseling, therapy), and social support.[15] The CDE has also encouraged schools to draw from existing mental health support and behavioral intervention strategies (e.g., positive intervention behavioral strategies), an approach that some schools in California are already implementing.[15] Recent studies have found positive impacts of these restorative practices on behavioral outcomes and suspension and expulsion rates, particularly for students of color – a subgroup of the student population that has been found to be disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of punitive measures.[4,13,16-18]

1.1.5 Disciplinary Incidents in California's Schools

Overall student suspension rates have remained at steady rates across the years. In the 2011-12 academic year, the state-wide suspension rates were at 5.8%, steadily decreased to 3.6% in 2016-17, and were most recently reported at 3.2% as of the 2021-22 academic year.[19] It is important to note that the 2018-19 academic year was the last full year of in-person instruction due to pandemic-related campus closures during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.[20] As such, suspension and expulsion data provided for the period during campus closures may not be

reflective of the actual number of students that may have committed suspendable offenses during this time.

Examination of drug-related suspensions in particular does not reveal any notable patterns. Nonetheless, as seen in Figure 1, a slight decrease in the total number of illicit drug-related suspensions is evident between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 academic years, with a steady increase in 2017-18. The notable decrease in the 2020-21 academic year is reflective of the school closures and transition to remote learning between March 2020 and Fall 2021, during which the majority of students were not attending school in-person.

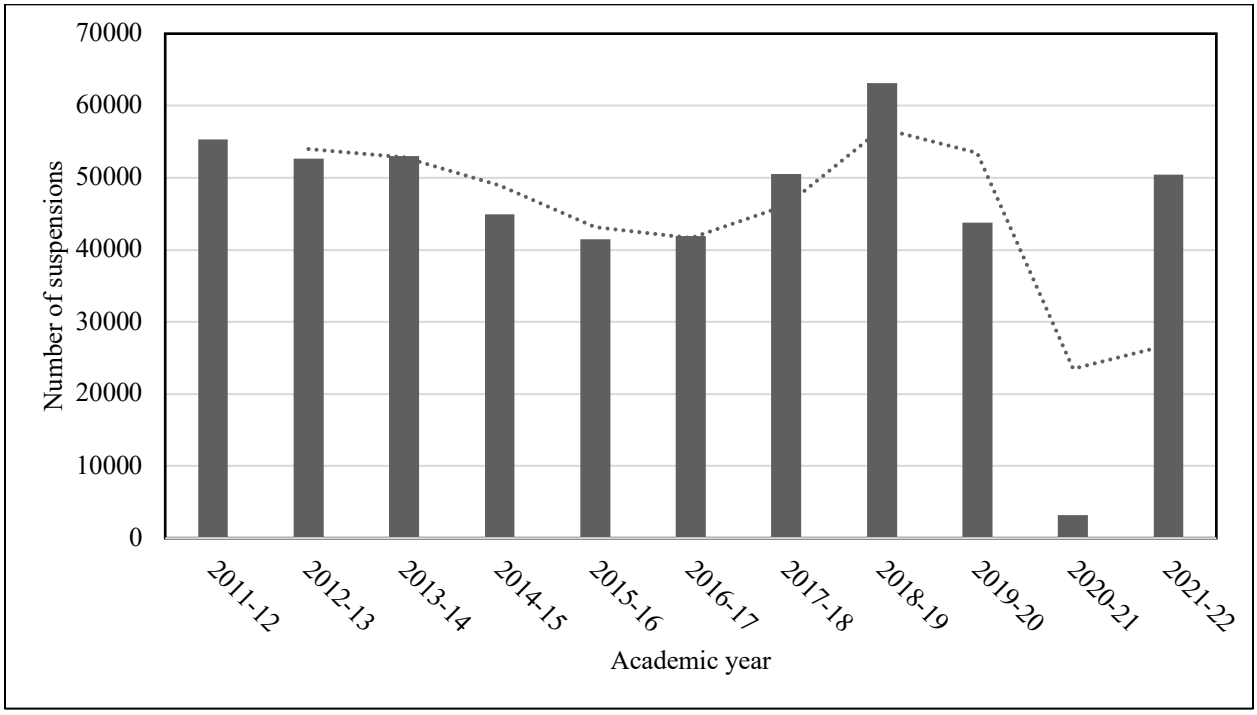

Figure 1: Drug-related suspensions in California schools from 2011-12 to 2021-22

Note: multi-year, aggregate reports of statewide data from the CDE's discipline data repository, DataQuest (https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/), were used to inform annual suspension calculations reported here.[19]

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Restorative Practices: An Alternative to Punitive Measures

One strategy for alternative-to-suspension programs is the incorporation of RJP approaches in disciplinary protocols. The philosophies embedded in RJPs are rooted in South Pacific and North American indigenous cultural values which emphasize the importance of community and interpersonal connectedness.[21,22] Originally implemented in criminal justice systems, they are an alternative to punitive measures found to be successful in reducing repeat offenses and fostering reintegration for the offender.[22] School systems in Australia began implementing RJPs in educational settings in the 1990's with other nations following shortly thereafter, including the United States.[22]

RJP philosophies focus on "wound repair", recognizing that entire communities are harmed when an individual commits an offense.[22] Major components of RJPs tie in community cohesiveness, harm repair, and reintegration.[23,24] In contrast to exclusionary discipline (e.g., incarceration, at home suspension), RJPs bring stakeholders together for civil discussions in a "safe space". Some critical components of RJPs that foster these "safe spaces" include restorative circles/restorative conferences, community-building circles, restorative conversations, and peer-to-peer mediations.[22] The overarching aims of RJPs are to restore communities and repair any harm done, similar to punitive measures; however, the main difference being a focus on strengthening relationships and reintegration for the offender.

1.2.2 Evaluating Restorative Practice Programs

Current methods for evaluating RJP programs and their respective components have mainly been implemented to assess impact and effectiveness on variables of interest. These

variables include participant behavioral changes, knowledge, shifts in school climate, and impacts on discipline landscapes. Most recently, Acosta and colleagues assessed implementation fidelity of RJP program components and their impacts on school climate, staff involvement and overall engagement utilizing a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design.[24] Using these variables, investigators made comparisons to schools not implementing RJP programs.[24] Other RCTs have examined differences in discipline rates, mainly suspension and expulsion rates, between non-RJP and RJP schools.[25] Gregory and colleagues examined the effectiveness of RJP policies and implementation in minimizing the suspension gap between White students and students of color.[25]

Observational study designs have been at the forefront of RJP program evaluations.[12,13,26,27] Researchers have utilized multi-level modeling of existing school discipline records to examine differences in suspensions and expulsions between schools implementing RJP programs and those utilizing punitive measures.[13] Others have taken a population-level approach, assessing knowledge and awareness of RJPs through secondary data available via the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).[26] Darling-Hammond and colleagues utilized CHKS data to examine student experiences with exposure to RJP programs, not necessarily impacts at the school-level.[26] Data from these types of studies provide insight into perceptions and potential effects on student behaviors and knowledge of RJPs. Researchers have also utilized interrupted time series methods using administrative data to examine trends in suspension rates prior to and after implementation of RJP program components.[12] Focusing on a large, urban school district, Hashim and colleagues analyzed aggregate suspension data to assess potential associations with RJP program implementation.[12] In their considerations, the authors noted RJP evaluations have

focused on larger school districts in urban settings, thus highlighting the need for more studies on the effectiveness of RJPs in smaller, rural school systems.[12]

Qualitative data collection and mixed method study designs have also been employed to measure impacts of RJP programs and to gather data on stakeholder experiences. These methods have mainly been implemented with the aim of filling the gap in the literature on stakeholder perceptions and experiences with RJP programs at the school-level.[23,28] Gathering stakeholder feedback, including student perceptions and experiences, has allowed researchers to further examine recommendations for improving the structure, development, and implementation of RJP programs.[29] Researchers have highlighted the importance of qualitative interviews in documenting staff and student perceptions of RJP approaches and the way they are implemented in real-world settings.[30,31] Qualitative interviews have also been found to be useful in measuring staff and student perceptions of cultural shifts that often arise with the implementation of RJPs.[4,17] Furthermore, researchers have also been able to determine which staff are generally more involved in specific RJP components via staff interviews which in turn inform recommendations for ideal staff roles to lead RJP development and implementation.[30] For instance, Sedillo-Hamman and colleagues highlighted the important role that school counselors and social workers might play in ensuring implementation fidelity and access to RJP resources among students.[18]

Limitations with these RJP program evaluation methods include the use of aggregate discipline data to assess impacts on suspension and expulsion rates. It is difficult to examine individual-level impacts on behavioral outcomes, youth development, and program perceptions; although, qualitative data have been found to adequately inform these dimensions. Additionally, research that isolates single RJP components (e.g., restorative circles/conferences) for evaluation

fails to consider other crucial aspects of an RJP program such as relationship restoration, apology letters, counseling/social-emotional support, and other resources that may be provided to students. A limited number of previous studies have assessed implementation fidelity of RJP components in school settings. This leaves a gap in the literature on the importance of assessing process measures to examine how well programs are being implemented as intended. Understanding an educational agency's initial scope of work and any goals outlined in RJP program proposals are crucial for a comprehensive evaluation.

1.2.3 Findings from RJP program Evaluations

Current RJP program evaluation research on changes in participant behavioral outcomes, disciplinary incident rates, and school climate/culture is limited. Although a significant shift to RJPs has been observed in school systems throughout the United States, current RJP evaluative research is not meeting the rate at which these programs are being implemented.[28] Nonetheless, most of the current studies have reported positive impacts of RJP programs on student behavior, academic achievement, school connectedness, and school climate.

More specifically, researchers have noted significant improvements in student behavioral outcomes and attitudes, academic achievement, and school connectedness. Students at schools that implement RJP programs have also noted improved student-teacher relationships.[30,32] The most significant impacts have been seen at the individual versus school levels.[24] RJP programs have also been found to be associated with significant improvements in behavioral outcomes and academic achievement for Black and Latino students.[13,18,26] However, current studies did not find an impact on the discipline gap in suspensions or expulsions between White students and students of color.[12,25] Nonetheless, students who were exposed to RJP programs and their

components had lower odds of being re-suspended after going through RJP interventions compared to those at non-RJP schools.[12,13,17,27,28]

Within the context of qualitative RJP evaluations, there are limited findings assessing student, staff, and educator perceptions of RJP programs. One qualitative study found that students had fewer positive comments on RJP learning outcomes in comparison to the communication skills and social-emotional learning components.[28] Furthermore, students have also highlighted their preference for "meaningful consequences" seen within RJP programs as opposed to traditional punitive measures.[30] The tailored consequences and reintegration of the offender were two main components that were positively viewed by students.[30] Nonetheless, more research on student experiences and perceptions of RJPs is needed to better understand individual perspectives and internal behavioral impacts. Collection of this data could help to improve current RJP program development, structure, and implementation strategies.

Staff and educators on the other hand tend to recognize the importance and positive impacts of RJP programs in school settings. When asked about RJP programs within the context of discipline, most educators and school staff understand the potentially positive impacts these programs can have on the suspension gap.[23,29] Additionally, educators have also voiced their concerns with current punitive and zero-tolerance policies in schools, implying a preference for RJP approaches.[30] Despite preference and support for RJPs, there are challenges with the actual implementation of said programs. For instance, staff buy-in and competing priorities were highlighted as barriers to successful RJP program implementation.[29] Public school systems are often understaffed and under-resourced, leading to high staff burnout and poor support for any nonacademic programming that may further cut into crucial class time. Therefore, researchers highlight the importance of staff trainings and having several staff engaged and involved in the

development and implementation of RJP programs, fostering a culture shift from "within" the staff community.[4] Nonetheless, it is crucial that staff are given the tools and training they need to implement RJP programs efficiently and effectively. For instance, trainings in which different RJP components are modeled (e.g., restorative circles) may increase self-efficacy among staff to implement these activities on their own.[23]

Overall, current RJP program evaluation research has found this approach to be a positive alternative to punitive, zero-tolerance disciplinary approaches. Both experimental and observational studies reported that RJPs may improve discipline rates and decrease the gap between White students and students of color. Qualitative findings have also shown that staff and students generally have positive perceptions of RJP programs; however, more research is needed to assess the individual-level impacts of such approaches on program enrollees.

1.3 Current Case: Nevada County, California

Located in the western Sierra Nevada foothills, Nevada County consists of two large towns, Nevada City and Grass Valley, surrounded by smaller rural communities hosting a total population of approximately 100,000 residents. Its location in Northeast California places the county in a region known for prevalent cannabis cultivation. When voters passed "Proposition 64: The Adult Use of Marijuana Act" in 2016, it provided a legal avenue for the integration of the marijuana industry in communities throughout Nevada County. However, despite a state-led effort to regulate cultivation and distribution, there still exists a low-cost, black market driving higher use rates among Nevada youth.[33]

Closer examination of overall use shows that Nevada youth report higher substance use rates when compared to state averages. Data from the 2019-2021 California Healthy Kids Survey

(CHKS) dashboard shows that among 7th, 9th, and 11th graders in Nevada County, 5%, 25% and 32%, respectively, reported AOD use in the past 30 days.[34] In comparison, 7%, 15%, and 23% of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders, respectively, reported past 30-day AOD use at the state level.[34] Looking specifically at marijuana, 3% of 7th graders, 15% of 9th graders and 20% of 11th graders reported using marijuana at least once in the last 30 days.[34] At the state level, 4% of 7th graders, 10% of 9th graders, and 16% of 11th graders reported past 30-day marijuana use.[34] Current vape or e-cigarette use was higher among Nevada County high schoolers with 3% of 7th graders, 18% of 9th graders, and 18% of 11th graders reporting using a vape in comparison to 4% of 7th graders, 9% of 9th graders, and 11% of 11th graders at the state level.[34]

1.3.1 Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions (RAYS)

To address the disproportionate use rates among the local student population, the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NCSOS) partnered with the county's public health department and Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) office to develop and launch the Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions (RAYS) program. NCSOS coordinators were granted funds through the Bureau of State Community Corrections Prop 64 Public Health & Safety Grant program, which aims to address community-level impacts of the passage of Proposition 64. Training and outreach were conducted from spring through summer of 2021 followed by a formal launch in August of 2021. The RAYS program has thus far been established at four public school sites in Nevada County – one middle school, two comprehensive high schools, and one continuation high school. The program's target population includes 6-12th graders currently enrolled at one of these four target sites who have committed a suspendable offense.

The RAYS program is rooted in RJPs with the main aim being to provide an alternative to suspension, non-punitive option for students who commit a suspendable infraction (hereinafter referred to as "offending students") at one of the four target schools. The three main goals outlined in the NCSOS Local Evaluation Plan (LEP) are as follows: (1) to reduce suspension rates at the four target sites, (2) reduce marijuana and other substance use among youth, and (3) increase student access to drug treatment services and counseling (as needed). A more comprehensive description of RAYS program goals and objectives is provided in Table 11 (see Appendix). While RAYS program components are tailored to address drug-related incidents, services are also provided for students who have committed non-drug-related offenses (e.g., violent acts, harassment/bullying, disruption, defiance). Critical components of the program include a 1-hour peer-led restorative circle, a 2-to-3-hour alcohol and drug safety skills class (aka, "Harm Reduction" class), community engagement activities, harm reparation, individual or group counseling sessions, and youth advocate engagement.

Offending students who are referred for disciplinary action (i.e., suspension) first meet with a site administrator. The administrator reviews the student's potential options, at which point the student may voluntarily elect either traditional suspension or to enroll in the RAYS program. Should the student select RAYS, they are referred to the program's Restorative Practices Coordinator, at which point they formally enroll in the program and schedule their restorative circle. During the restorative circle, students collaborate with a team of their peers to develop a Restorative Plan – a contract outlining the various activities that the offending student must complete in order to successfully exit the program. The activities outlined in a student's Restorative Plan are dependent on the offense and what the peer team believes would be most beneficial for the offending student. Figure 2 provides a visualization of the RAYS enrollment

process and critical program components. Core components of the RAYS program and respective definitions are listed below.

(1) ***Restorative Circles:*** Peer-led restorative circles provide offending students with the opportunity to reflect on their infraction, discuss how to move forward, and develop a Restorative Plan in a 1-hour, small-group discussion with a team of approximately five of their peers (i.e., youth advocates).

(2) ***Alcohol and Drug Safety Skills Classes:*** The Alcohol and Drug Safety Skills (aka, "Harm Reduction") classes entail curriculum rooted in harm reduction practices focused on addressing risky use behaviors. These classes provide adolescents with knowledge on various substances and the skills and tools to identify harmful use behaviors. Curricular components include modules on alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and misuse of opioids and over the counter (OTC) medications[1]. Students assigned to attend these courses participate in a 2-to-3-hour session led by a RAYS program coordinator.

(3) ***Community Engagement:*** In developing their Restorative Plan, offending students may work with a team of their peers to identify a community service-oriented activity. Ideally the activity is tailored to overlap with the student's interests to encourage engagement and completion.

(4) ***Harm Reparation:*** The intent of harm reparation is for the student to come up with a way to formally apologize to any individual(s) they may have harmed or offended as a result of their infraction. This can be done in the form of a verbal or written apology.

[1] Measures for opioid or OTC use behaviors and perceptions of opioid or OTC use were not added to pre/post survey instruments until August of 2022. As such, limited data was collected for these dimensions and thus are not reported in the Results section.

(5) Individual or Group Counseling: Counseling services are also offered to students who may need additional support or guidance during their time in RAYS and beyond. These counseling services provide students with tailored mental health support to address potential stressors that may influence their engagement in harmful substance use behaviors. General counseling is also provided for students who wish to discuss non-drug-related topics. Furthermore, upon exiting the RAYS program, students may continue counseling sessions with the RAYS counselor or be referred for additional support services to an external agency as needed.

(6) Youth Advocates: As a peer-led program, students from any of the four target sites may engage in RAYS as youth advocates. Through this role, students are trained in restorative practices, non-violent communication, critical thinking, and sympathy and empathy practices. Advocates are responsible for overseeing each Restorative Circle and working with an offending student to develop a Restorative Plan. Some advocates may also be assigned to partner with an offending student to act as a guide during their time in RAYS. Some former offending students may also join RAYS as peer advocates after completing their own Restorative Plan.

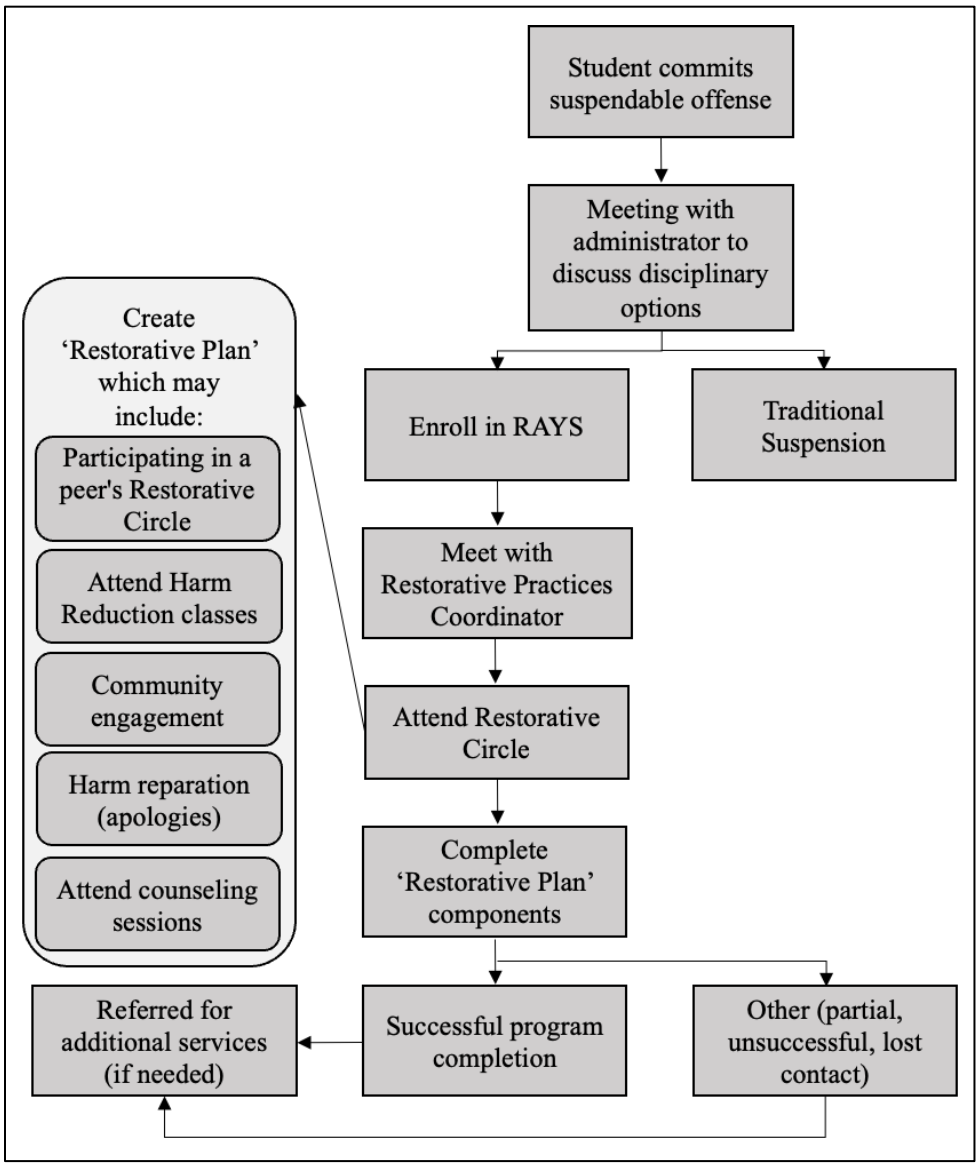

Figure 2: Flowchart of steps in the RAYS enrollment and exit processes

1.4 Study Objectives

The current study is an intermediate evaluation of Nevada County's RAYS program with the aim of assessing the overall impact on school disciplinary incidents, student AOD use behaviors, perceptions of substances and use, self-responsibility, and awareness of school substance use and mental health resources. This project is intermediate in that it seeks to inform

larger evaluation efforts outlined in a contract agreement between Professor Shu-Hong Zhu's research team at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and the NCSOS RAYS team. Furthermore, this evaluation may inform limited research of RJP program evaluation with a small, rural school district in a region with a prevalent cannabis cultivation industry.

Findings from this project may help to fill the gap in the literature on restorative program evaluation for drug-related incidents in school-based settings. This may inform efforts for developing, implementing, and evaluating public school-based restorative programs with a substance use focus. Data from this project may also provide the grantee with crucial intermediate findings to inform the continuous development and optimization of RAYS program components and implementation strategies.

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1 Background

NCSOS contracted the services of UCSD to design and oversee a process and outcome evaluation of the implementation of the RAYS program. To capture relevant process and outcome measures, UCSD researchers collaborated with NCSOS RAYS coordinators to design and develop three data repositories: (1) an activity log tracking tool, (2) a case management database, and (3) pretest and posttest survey instruments. These tools have been utilized to evaluate implementation fidelity of each core component of the program as well as to measure any potential impacts of the intervention on outcomes of interest. A complete list of relevant process evaluation measures and outcome variables, and their respective definitions and data sources are provided in Tables 12 and 13, respectively (see Appendix). This project received an administrative determination as non-human subjects research from the UCSD Human Research Protections Program (IRB #802516) according to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, part 46.

2.2 Data Sources

2.2.1 Activity Log Database

The General Activity Log (GAL) database was developed utilizing the SeaTable Cloud software service (3.3.7, 2022). UCSD researchers conducted training sessions with RAYS program coordinators where data recording protocols were reviewed to ensure accurate and efficient collection of activity data. Links between the GAL and the case management database were established to track participation in RAYS activities at the individual enrollee level. RAYS program coordinators recorded all relevant activity data in the GAL at the time of

implementation or ideally within the same month the activity was implemented. Critical activity data for process evaluation included activity name, implementation date, number and type of attendees (e.g., students, staff), engagement levels, and duration of the activity (in hours).

2.2.2 Case Management Database

The case management database was embedded in the same SeaTable cloud-based platform as the GAL. Core components of the case management database that informed both process and outcome evaluation measures included data from the Enrollment Form, Exit Form, and the Demographics Questionnaire. Upon enrolling a student, a RAYS program coordinator was responsible for recording the reason for referral to the RAYS program, date of enrollment, student status, school information, point of youth diversion, participation status (i.e., voluntary vs. required), and any notes from the disciplinary incident report. During this same meeting, students were prompted to complete the Demographics Questionnaire, which collected information on race/ethnicity, gender identity, and age.

Once the student completed RAYS, a program coordinator would submit an Exit Form where they would document the RAYS activities that the student was initially assigned via their Restorative Plan, which ones they completed, reason for exiting the program (e.g., successful completion, partial completion, lost contact/left school), and date of the program exit. Individual data from the Enrollment Form, Exit Form, and Demographics Questionnaire all formed each enrollee's Student Profile which was linked to any RAYS activities that a student participated in.

2.2.3 Pretest and Posttest Surveys

To inform the outcome evaluation, pretest and posttest surveys were developed and administered to students to examine any changes in the enrollees' sense of self-responsibility, past 30-day AOD use behaviors, perceptions of AOD use, and awareness of resources. Questions and scales were adapted from the 2019-20 California Student Tobacco Survey (CSTS) and the 2021-22 Mapping Youth Health Behavior Survey (MYHB), both of which are population-based survey instruments developed and utilized by Professor Shu-Hong Zhu's research team with dimensions in substance use and relevant covariables (e.g., mental health, social health). Both pretest and posttest survey instruments were programmed and administered using the Qualtrics Platform^{XM} (2022). The pretest included approximately 35 questions on the abovementioned variables while the posttest included an additional 6 questions on student experiences in RAYS. Students took approximately 8-10 minutes to complete either survey.

Participants were asked whether they had used marijuana (any form), vapes with nicotine or just flavoring, alcohol, or opioids (e.g., Fentanyl, Percocet, Oxycodone) to get "high" in the last 12 months. Questions pertaining to opioid use were not added to the pretest and posttest instruments until Fall 2022; as such, data on opioid use behaviors and perceptions are not reported here due to the low number of responses. Utilizing a skip logic design, participants were asked to indicate past 30-day use of any products they said they had used in the last 12 months. Participants were also asked product-specific follow-up questions on frequency of use and intentions to quit any product they reported using in the past 30 days (data not reported here). All students were prompted to indicate their perception of the harm of using each substance "some days" and "every day" with a 5-point scale ranging from (1) "not at all harmful" to (5) "extremely harmful".

A 4-item scale on self-responsibility and personal awareness included questions derived and adapted from Mergler and colleagues' personal responsibility scale for adolescents.[35] A 4-item Likert scale (1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree) was used to assess student awareness of resources. For the posttest instrument only, students were also prompted to assess their overall experience in RAYS via a 3-item Likert scale reflecting on RAYS components and likelihood of recommending the program to others. Additional open-text questions prompted students to provide feedback on what they liked and disliked about the program, as well as what they believed could be changed.

RAYS program coordinators administered the pretest to students upon program enrollment, ideally prior to their first exposure to an intervention activity. The posttest was administered to students upon exiting the program (around the time the Exit Form was submitted). Each RAYS student was randomly assigned an alphanumeric passphrase upon enrollment which was linked to their student profile in SeaTable. Students were instructed to enter their assigned passphrase when taking the pretest and posttest surveys to allow for longitudinal linkage. Pretest and posttest responses were linked utilizing these passphrases in lieu of student names. Prior to analysis, data was deidentified by reassigning each linked pretest and posttest response pair with a new passphrase to ensure student confidentiality and by removing the linkage to their respective student profiles.

2.2.4 Discipline Data

Suspension data was extracted from the CDE's public data repository, DataQuest.[19] Multi-year, aggregate reports on suspension counts were exported for each of the four school sites in Nevada County. Four comparable school sites were matched to the Nevada County sites

and used as comparators. Discipline data reports from comparable sites were included in this study to examine any differences in the number of suspensions over time from Nevada County sites. Data was categorized into overall suspension and drug-related suspension counts to allow for the examination of changes in drug-related disciplinary incidents from the 2017-18 to 2021-22 academic year.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

Data from the SeaTable activity log and case management databases for the reporting period May 2021 to January 2023 were exported and converted to Microsoft Excel® files. Activity data was cleaned, filtered by implementation date, and tabulated to report the number of activity exposures by attendee type (e.g., students, staff, administrators, parents). Case management data, including demographics and enrollment and exit data, was cleaned and re-linked to passphrase-matched enrollee profiles.

Suspension data for Nevada County schools and matched comparable sites was examined for changes in overall and drug-related suspensions from the 2017-18 to 2021-22 academic years. Comparable school sites from a neighboring county were identified utilizing school-level data from CDE site profiles. Each Nevada County school was matched with a comparable site based on enrollment size, racial/ethnic breakdown, and regional proximity. For reference, during the 2021-22 academic year, all four Nevada County sites reported a cumulative enrollment of 3,001 compared to 2,900 at the comparable sites. No drastic changes in enrollment numbers were reported for either the Nevada County or the comparable sites from the 2017-18 to the 2021-22 academic year.[19] RAYS program coordinators approved the selection of these comparable sites. Differences in these suspension counts between Nevada County schools and comparable sites

were examined to inform the evaluation of the potential impact of RAYS on the number of disciplinary incidents over time.

Pretest and posttest survey data was exported and converted to Microsoft Excel® files from the Qualtrics Platform^{XM}® (2022) online survey database. Using the randomly assigned passphrases, each respondent's pretest and posttest data was linked to analyze behavioral outcome changes from pretest to posttest. Descriptive analytical methods were employed to tabulate counts and percentages for each question response option at pretest and posttest. To evaluate changes in enrollee knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors, the percentages of participants who selected each response option for each question were compared from pretest to posttest. All percentages reported are of the total pretest and posttest survey sample (N=21). RStudio© statistical software (1.4.1717) was used to conduct all analyses while Microsoft Excel® was used to tabulate all activity and case-level data.

Chapter 3: Results

3.1 Sample Characteristics

Demographic data for all students who enrolled in RAYS between August 2021 and January 2023 is provided in Table 1. Over half of all enrollees self-identified as non-Hispanic White (59.02%) followed by multiracial (24.59%) and Hispanic/Latino/Spanish individuals (11.48%). A significant majority of enrollees were 13-17 (80.33%) years of age with only 14.75% stating that they were 12 years or younger and 4.92% who were 18 or older. Over one-third of students identified as female (39.34%) and over half identified as male (57.38%). The majority of students were enrolled at one of the three high school sites (70.49%) while just under one-third attended the local middle school (29.51%).

Table 1: Demographics of students enrolled in RAYS between August 2021 and January 2023

Demographic categories	**Percentage of students N=61**
Race/ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4.92
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	11.48
White	59.02
Multiple (2+)	24.59
Age	
12 years or younger	14.75
13-17	80.33
18-20 or older	4.92
Gender identity	
Female	39.34
Male	57.38
Non-binary/3rd gender	1.64
Other	1.64
School type	
High School	70.49
Middle School/Junior High School	29.51

Table 2 presents data from the case management logs including student enrollment details and reasons for their referral to the RAYS program. All students who enrolled in RAYS between August 2021 and January 2023 were diverted from a school-based incident. Most students were diverted to RAYS from a drug-related incident (73.02%) which was defined as being in possession of or using a substance on or close to school grounds. The remainder of enrollees were referred to RAYS for a variety of reasons ranging from harassment/bullying-related incidents (3.17%), attendance issues (3.17%), school violence/fighting (3.17%), or vandalism (4.76%). Two students also re-enrolled in RAYS during this period (3.28%) while the majority were first-time enrollees (96.72%).

Table 2: Referral types and reasons for RAYS enrollments from August 2021 to January 2023

Referral type	**Percentage of enrollments N=63***
Source of referral	
School/truancy	100.0
Point of Youth Diversion	
No contact with law enforcement	77.78
Unknown	22.22
Reason for referral	
Drug-related	73.02
Harassment/bullying	3.17
Truancy/attendance issues	3.17
School violence/fight	3.17
Vandalism	4.76
Other[a]	12.70
Number of times enrolled in RAYS	
Once	96.72
More than once	3.28

*Note: two students reenrolled in the RAYS program during this period.
[a]'Other' reasons included issues with defiance, disrespect, and non-adherence to school rules and policies.

Among students with drug-related incidents (N=46), 6.52% were caught with an alcoholic product, 47.83% with marijuana, 39.13% with a nicotine-containing vape product, and

6.52% with a vape product that had unknown contents (see Table 3). Out of all students with drug-related incidents, 15.22% had a device used for smoking and/or the combustion of marijuana-derived substances (e.g., leaves, buds), 10.87% had a marijuana vape device, and 2.17% had an edible or drinkable marijuana product. Approximately 1 out of 5 students (19.57%) were caught with a marijuana product or device in which the modality of use was not reported or was unknown.

Table 3: Types of substances students were caught in possession of or using

Substance Type	**Percentage of students N=46**
Alcohol	6.52
Marijuana product	
Smoking device	15.22
Vaping device	10.87
Edibles, drinks	2.17
Unclear[a]	19.57
Vape device	
Nicotine	39.13
Unclear substance[b]	6.52
Other	2.17

Note: percentages do not add up to 100 as some students were caught with more than one substance.
[a] 'Marijuana – Unclear' means that the student was caught with marijuana paraphernalia, but the modality (i.e., smoking, vape device) was not reported or was unknown.
[b] 'Vaping – Unclear' means that the student was caught with vaping paraphernalia, but the substance (i.e., marijuana or nicotine) was not reported or was unknown.

3.2 Activity Logs and Cases

Table 4 provides a breakdown of all RAYS activities implemented from May 2021 to January 2023. Data in each column presents the total number of exposures for each activity by attendee type – student, staff, administrator, parent, and "other". The majority of student exposures was through informational presentations (N=1,822) as these events reached a broader range of students, not just the youth advocates and students enrolled in RAYS. Exposure counts

are reported in place of participant counts as some individuals may have attended multiple sessions or events of the same activity type. Therefore, the counts presented in Table 4 may reflect duplicate exposures to a specific activity.

Table 4: RAYS activities implemented from August 2021 to January 2023

Activity Type	Count of activities N=349	Total # of student exposures[a] N=3185	Total # staff exposures N=607	Total # admin exposures N=159	Total # of parent exposures N=50	Total # 'other' exposures N=72
Harm Reduction class	8	40				
General Counseling	32	32				
General Counseling #1	5	5				
General Counseling #2	13	13				
General Counseling #3	6	6				
NCSOS Partnership Meeting	4		5	28		
Peer Advocate Meeting	10	103	9	2		
Peer Advocate Training	30	519	27	4		
RAYS Circle	56	425	84	1		
Informational Presentation	25	1822	241	54	50	72
Staff Meeting	30		59	43		
Staff Training	12	8	162	27		
Substance Use Counseling	11	11				
Substance Use Counseling #1	40	40				
Substance Use Counseling #2	29	29				
Substance Use Counseling #3	30	30				
UCSD/NCSOS Meeting						
Other[b]	3	102	1			

*Note: number of exposures for each activity should not be considered unique attendee counts and may be duplicates of attendees participating in a certain activity. For example, the number of students who attended Peer Advocate Trainings is inflated (N=519) as most students may have attended more than one training.

[a]Total # of student exposures includes both RAYS and non-RAYS students (i.e., peer advocates NOT enrolled in RAYS).

3.3 Pretest and Posttest Findings

The following sections report results from the RAYS pretest and posttest survey responses. The findings reported here should be interpreted with caution given that these results are from an intermediate evaluation. All findings are preliminary and should not be considered as a comprehensive assessment of the RAYS program. Additionally, due to a small pretest and posttest survey sample size, data may not be inclusive of all students who participated in the RAYS program. Overall, a total of 21 out of the 48 participants who exited RAYS during this evaluation period submitted a matched pair of pretest and posttest survey responses, equating to an approximate 43.75% response rate. Discussions with program coordinators revealed unanticipated logistical challenges with ensuring all students who exited RAYS submitted both pretest and posttest survey responses. Nonetheless, current protocols are being revised to increase pretest and posttest survey response rates. Despite these limitations, the findings reported here may provide insight into the potential individual-level impacts of the RAYS program on select variables of interest.

3.3.1 Self-responsibility

Differences in student responses to questions on self-responsibility and personal awareness from pretest to posttest are found in Table 5. The proportion of students who *strongly agreed* or *somewhat agreed* with statements on self-responsibility did not significantly change from pretest to posttest. There was a slight increase in the percentage of students who agreed that before they do something, they think about how it will affect the people around them; however, agreement levels for other statements remained the same or did not change drastically.

Table 5: Proportion of students who strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with statements on self-responsibility

Statements	Percentage of students at Pretest N=21	Percentage of students at Posttest N=21
I am mainly responsible for my future	100.0	100.0
I believe I should do my best regardless of the outcome.	95.2	95.2
Before I do something, I think about how it will affect the people around me.	71.4	85.7
If I make a mistake, I am usually willing to admit to it.	100.0	95.2

3.3.2 Self-reported Substance Use

Table 6 presents the percentage of students at pretest and posttest who reported using a substance in the last 30 days. Out of the 21 students, 52.38% reported having used a marijuana product (including vaping, smoking, and/or consuming) in the last 30 days at pretest whereas 38.1% said they had recently used marijuana at posttest. A similar reduction was seen with the proportion of students reporting past 30-day vape use, with 66.67% of students reporting using a vape with nicotine or just flavoring at pretest and 38.1% at posttest. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of students who said they had drunk alcohol, with 19.05% reporting past 30-day alcohol use at pretest and 9.52% at posttest.

Table 6: Proportion of students who reported using a substance in the last 30 days

Product type	Percentage of students at Pretest N=21	Percentage of students at Posttest N=21
Marijuana[a]	52.38	38.1
Vapes with nicotine or just flavoring	66.67	38.1
Alcohol	19.05	9.52

[a]Marijuana use includes vaping, smoking, and consuming (edibles, drinks) cannabis-containing products

3.3.3 Perceptions of Substance Use

Table 7 provides a breakdown of the proportion of students who believed it was either *very harmful* or *extremely harmful* to use marijuana, vapes, or alcohol every day. At pretest, 33.33% of students thought it was harmful to use marijuana every day while 28.57% believed this at posttest. For everyday alcohol use, 95.24% believed it was harmful at pretest with a slight decrease to 85.71% at posttest. There were no changes in the proportion of students for perceptions of harm of everyday vape use.

Table 7: Proportion of students who believed using each substance EVERY DAY is very harmful or extremely harmful

	Percentage of students at Pretest N=21	**Percentage of students at Posttest N=21**
Marijuana	33.33	28.57
Vapes with nicotine or just flavoring	71.43	71.43
Alcohol	95.24	85.71

3.3.4 Awareness of Resources

To measure changes in awareness of resources prior to and after going through RAYS, students were prompted to indicate how much they agreed with statements on identification of services and resources at their school. Table 8 reports the proportion of students who either *somewhat agreed* or *strongly agreed* with statements on student self-efficacy of being able to identify mental health and substance use services. There was a slight increase in the percentage of students who believed they could name at least one person or place that they could go to for support with mental health-related issues (i.e., feelings of sadness, stress, or depression) with 90.48% saying they could at pretest and 95.25% at posttest. Awareness of support or resources for substance use-related issues also increased, with 71.43% saying they would be able to name a

place or person at pretest and 90.48% at posttest. When asked if they would be able to refer a friend or classmate to such services, 71.43% said they would be able to at pretest and 85.71% at posttest.

Table 8: Proportion of students who somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with statements on resource awareness

Statements	**Percentage of students at Pretest N=21**	**Percentage of students at Posttest N=21**
I can name at least one place or person at my school that I can go to for help when I feel sad, stressed, or depressed.	90.48	95.24
If I had a friend or classmate who needed help when they were feeling sad, stressed, or depressed, I would be able to refer them to a place or person at school.	90.48	90.48
I can name at least one place or person at my school that I can go to for help with substance use problems (Ex. marijuana, vapes, cigarettes, alcohol).	71.43	90.48
If I had a friend or classmate who needed help with substance use problems (Ex. marijuana, vapes, cigarettes, alcohol), I would be able to refer them to a place or person at school.	71.43	85.71

3.3.5 Experience in RAYS program

To assess overall student experiences in RAYS, participants were prompted with both quantitative and open-text questions at posttest. Table 9 presents the proportion of students who either *somewhat agreed* or *strongly agreed* with statements regarding RAYS. Of the 21 participants who exited RAYS between August 2021 and January 2023, 80.95% believed that the program helped them to think about how their substance use affects others. The majority of students (95.24%) found the resources provided through RAYS to be available when they needed them. Additionally, 80.95% said that they would recommend the program to others.

Table 9: Proportion of students who somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with statements about their experience in the RAYS program

	Percentage of students at Posttest N=21 (%)
The RAYS program helped me to think about how my substance use affects others.	80.95
I found the resources provided through the RAYS program (Ex. support, counseling, youth development) to be available when I needed them.	95.24
I would recommend the RAYS program to others.	80.95

Students were also asked what they liked and disliked about RAYS and what they would change about the program via open-text questions. Overall, enrollees expressed their appreciation for the education received through RAYS, with some students highlighting their preference for substance use education in lieu of traditional forms of punishment. Some students also indicated that they enjoyed learning about drugs, what is and isn't a drug, and how to identify harmful substance use behaviors. One student noted the information they learned through RAYS was "valuable" and that they could "take [it] with [them] in life" citing the program as a "second chance" to change their health behaviors.

Multiple students also noted the core components of peer involvement and tailored support. One student specifically mentioned how it "wasn't just adults involved" but also other "kids going through things just like [them], with the same experiences that [they] have". Enrollees also cited the people involved as important contributors to making the program helpful and enjoyable. Students described the individuals involved in administering and implementing RAYS as welcoming and open-minded, fostering a non-judgmental environment. One student noted how RAYS advocates and staff are "open and listen to what you have to say" and provide valuable support in helping the students obtain the resources they may need.

The self-reflective nature of RAYS components was also brought up by multiple students. They noted how RAYS helped them to reflect on the mistakes that they had made in an educational rather than a punitive environment. These alternative to punitive approaches were highly regarded by students as something valuable and engaging. One enrollee said that they "liked that it gave [them] an opportunity to understand what [they] did wrong without just being taken out of school" while also giving them "the chance to take constructive criticism about [their] substance use". Students also noted the community engagement piece in positive regards as something that allowed them to maintain a relationship with their peers and school community.

When asked what they disliked about the program, most students noted that there wasn't anything they felt that they strongly disliked or would like to see done differently. Nonetheless, a few enrollees cited aspects related to the logistics of program delivery and knowledge of peer advocates. Some students believed that the program was time-consuming and interfered with their academics. For instance, two students noted that they were pulled out of class to attend RAYS-related activities as required by their Restorative Plans. A few students also said that the program felt more prolonged compared to just "being suspended and then going back". Multiple students also felt that much of the program was not a choice, despite RAYS being a voluntary program. One student noted that they felt like they were "forced" to "give a formal apology" while others did not appreciate that some of their peers acted like they did not want to be there.

The majority of students did not believe there was much that needed to be changed about the RAYS program. However, a few students did feel that more education and training for the peer advocates was needed. For instance, one student noted that they believed peer advocates needed more training on how to approach sensitive topics that may arise during discussions

between advocates and enrollees. When it came to the program timeline, students who cited these aspects had mixed responses. Some believed that more time was needed to be able to complete the required components of their Restorative Plans, while others felt that the program was overextended and time-consuming.

3.4 Suspension Counts

Total suspension counts by academic year for RAYS schools and non-RAYS schools are reported in Figure 3. “RAYS schools” represent the four target school sites in Nevada County implementing the RAYS program while “non-RAYS” schools are the selected comparable sites not implementing RAYS. Figure 3 presents the total number of suspensions reported to the CDE for the 2017-18 through 2021-22 academic years at these sites. Prior to the launch of RAYS in August of 2021, Nevada schools reported a higher number of suspensions overall when compared to the non-RAYS sites. Examination of these counts from pre- to post-launch of RAYS (dotted line in Figure 3) reveals a notable difference in the number of suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools, with RAYS schools reporting less than half (N=229) of those at non-RAYS sites (N=534) after this time point.

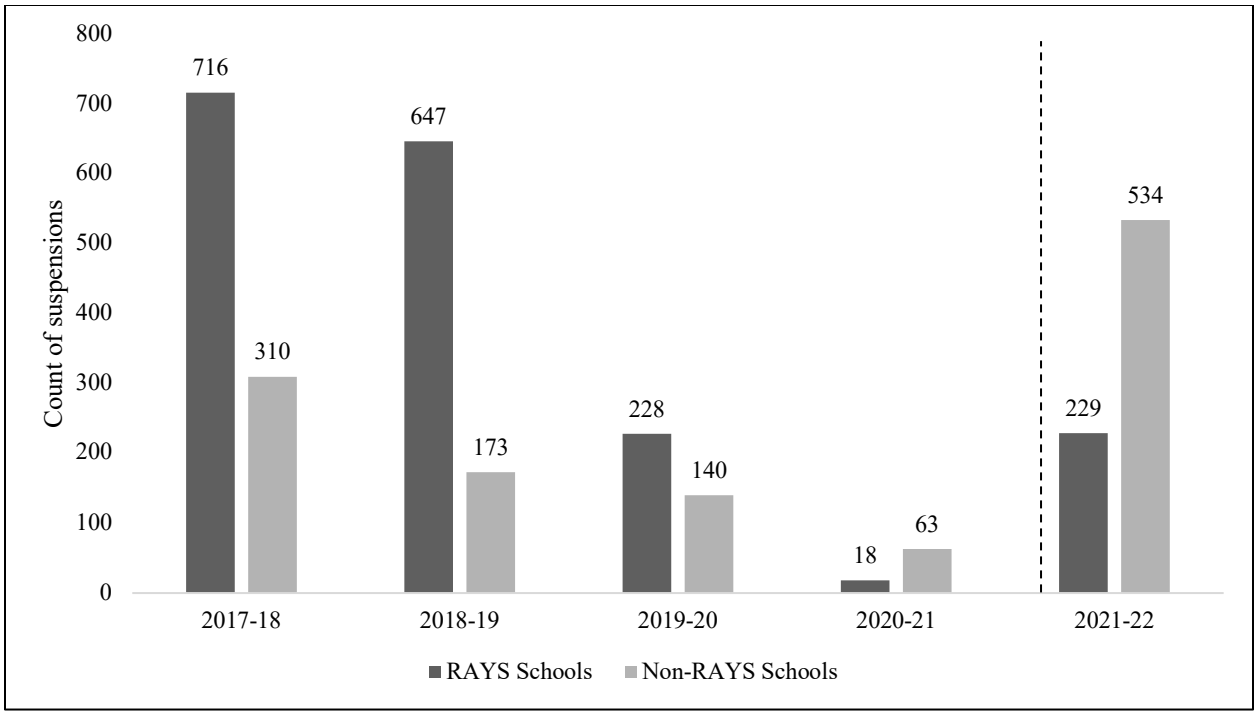

Figure 3: Total number of suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools

Note: data reported for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years may not be reflective of the actual number of incidents that could have resulted in a suspension due to remote learning.

The total number of drug-related suspensions at both RAYS and non-RAYS sites from the 2017-18 to 2021-22 academic year are presented in Figure 4. The CDE considers possession, use, sale, or furnishing of any opiates, opium derivatives, hallucinogenic substances (cannabis & THCs), depressants, stimulants, alcohol, tobacco products and any other controlled substance listed in chapter 2 of the California Health and Safety Code as a drug-related incident warranting suspension.[11,14] In the 2018-19 academic year, Nevada County sites reported almost three times the number of drug-related suspensions (N=186) in relation to comparable schools (N=66). Examination of these suspension counts revealed that after RAYS was implemented in August of 2021 (dotted line in Figure 4), RAYS schools (i.e., Nevada County sites) reported approximately half the amount (54.62%) of drug-related suspensions as the non-RAYS schools.

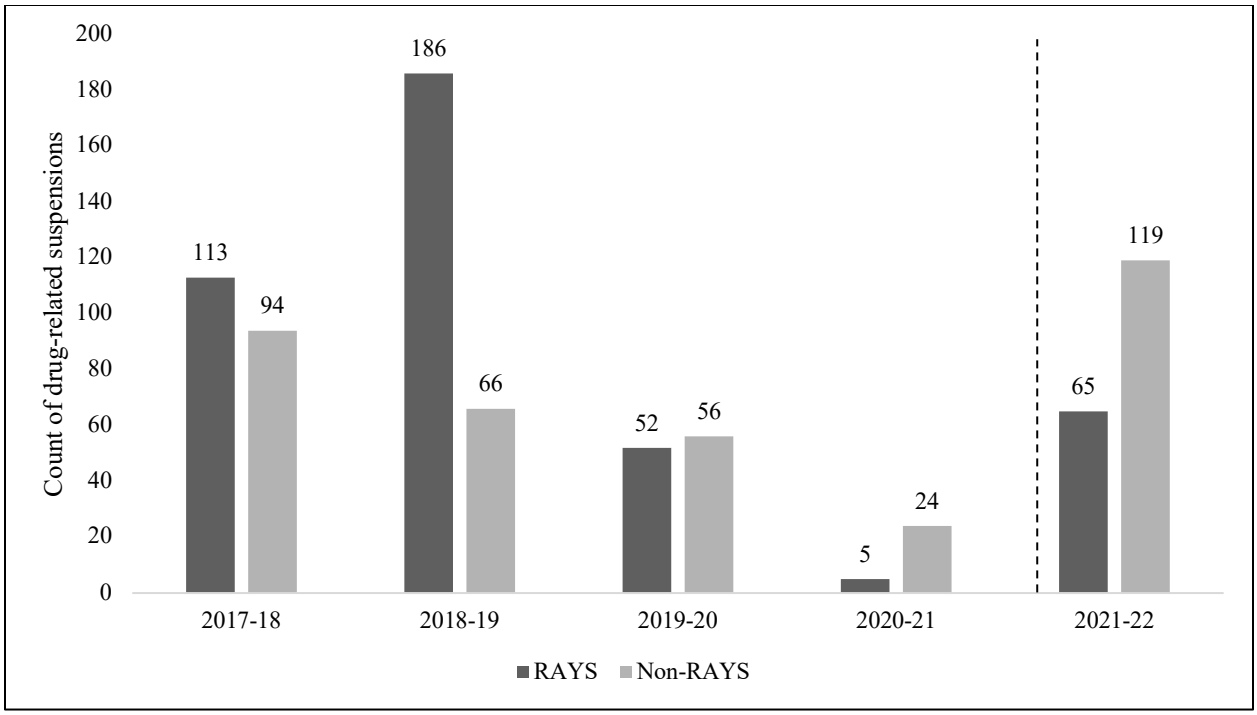

Figure 4: Total number of drug-related suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools

Note: Data reported for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years may not be reflective of the actual number of incidents that could have resulted in a suspension due to remote learning.

3.5 Implementation fidelity

Table 10 provides a breakdown of the exit reasons and completion statuses for all students who exited RAYS during this period (N=48). Roughly 4 out of 5 (81.25%) students who exited the program were marked as 'successful completions', meaning they completed most if not all the components outlined in their Restorative Plans. Of these successful completions, 17.94% returned and joined RAYS as peer advocates. For the remainder of the sample, RAYS services were found to be inappropriate or unsuitable for 6.25% of students, 4.17% left school or were lost to follow-up, and 8.33% left for another reason. Out of all students, 70.83% completed all components outlined in their Restorative Plans while 29.17% did not. These completion rates are in line with the program objective to reach a 75% successful completion rate among RAYS enrollees by April 2024 (see Table A).

Table 10: Completion statuses of students who exited RAYS from August 2021 to January 2023

Completion status	**Percentage of students N=48**
Exit reason	
Successful completion	66.67
Successful completion – joined RAYS	14.58
Services not appropriate for youth	6.25
Left school (lost contact)	4.17
Other	8.33
Restorative Plan component completion	
Completed all components	70.83
Did NOT complete all components	29.17

Note: statuses marked as 'Services not appropriate for youth', 'Left school (lost contact)' and 'Other' are all considered "unsuccessful" program completions

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Summary of Findings

The increasing utilization of restorative practices to address disciplinary incidents in school settings has highlighted the need for evaluations to assess the effectiveness of such programs in lieu of traditional punitive measures. This study reported findings from an intermediate evaluation of an RJP program with AOD use education and treatment counseling components. To properly execute this evaluation, student pretest and posttest survey data was analyzed to assess individual-level impacts of the RAYS program on AOD use behaviors and perceptions of substances, self-responsibility, and resource awareness. Process measures including all activity-level and enrollee case management data were tabulated and examined to assess implementation fidelity in meeting program goals and objectives outlined in the original grant proposal. Discipline data was used to inform evaluation questions pertaining to changes in overall and drug-related suspensions from pre- to post-implementation of RAYS in Nevada County sites.

Of the sample of students who submitted pretest and posttest data (N=21), most reported favorable behavioral changes from pre- to post-exposure to RAYS. The majority of RAYS enrollees reported a decrease in past 30-day use of alcohol, marijuana, and vapes with nicotine or just flavoring, indicating a potentially favorable impact of the program in addressing student AOD use behaviors. Additionally, exposure to the RAYS program also seemed to have an impact on student awareness of substance use support and services at their sites, with the majority of students saying they would be able to identify such entities at their schools. In general, students also had positive experiences with RAYS and believed the resources provided were helpful. Examination of the trends in disciplinary incidents from the 2017-18 to 2021-22 academic year

revealed a decrease in the total number of suspensions within RAYS schools over time. In relation to comparable sites with regional and demographic similarities, schools at which RAYS was being implemented reported a decreasing trend in suspensions while non-RAYS schools reported an increase.

Results from this intermediate evaluation of RAYS also allow for an assessment of implementation fidelity in meeting the original goals and objectives outlined in the project proposal and local evaluation plan (see Table A in Appendix). The three main goals of the program were to (1) reduce overall suspension rates at the four target sites, (2) reduce youth marijuana and other substance use, and (3) increase access to SUD treatment services. Relevant process and outcome measures used to inform implementation fidelity assessment and to measure goal and objective attainment are outlined in Tables B and C in the Appendix. Process evaluation measures encompass acquisition of services, RAYS completion rates and statuses (e.g., successful, unsuccessful, lost-to-follow up), and recidivism rate calculations. The outcome evaluation measures include variables such as the suspension rates, suspension counts, AOD use rates, and perceptions of AOD use. Assessment of success in meeting some of these goals and objectives is further discussed in the sections below as they pertain to the relevant process and outcome measure variables.

4.2 Comparison to Previous Restorative Program Evaluations

4.2.1 Individual-Level Impacts

One of the objectives (see Table A) was to reduce marijuana and other substance use among youth who participated in the RAYS program. Based on findings from pretest and posttest data, the majority of students who exited RAYS during the evaluation period reported a decrease

in past 30-day use across all products including marijuana, vapes with nicotine or just flavoring, and alcohol. Students who indicated that they used marijuana or vapes reported the highest percent decreases from pretest to posttest. Given that one of the main reasons for establishing RAYS in NCSOS was to address high marijuana, vape, and other drug use rates among students, the decreases seen from pre- to post-exposure of the RAYS program is indicative of the potentially positive impacts on student substance use behaviors. Program components addressing substance use such as the harm reduction classes and SUD counseling may be playing an important role in educating students on the harms of using and providing necessary emotional and mental health support, respectively. However, pretest and posttest data for the harm reduction classes, although outlined in the project proposal, has not been collected due to logistical challenges with survey administration. Therefore, it is recommended that harm reduction pretests and posttests be administered to students participating in this component in order to assess the specific impacts of these educational sessions on AOD use behaviors and perceptions.

Nonetheless, when it comes to harm perceptions, the proportion of students who believed marijuana use was harmful was relatively low compared to other substances. These low harm-perception rates for marijuana use reported among the RAYS sample are similar to national trends. For instance, in the most recent report of the MTF survey, about 22% of adolescents in the US perceived regular use of marijuana as risky.[2] In comparison, 33.3% of RAYS students thought it was very or extremely harmful to use marijuana every day at pretest. This proportion decreased to 28.6% at posttest, following similar percent decreases reported in recent MTF survey cycles. Nonetheless, perceived harm of everyday vape and alcohol use was higher, but no favorable changes (increased perceived harm) were noted for either product. Low perceived

harm may be attributed to a variety of social and environmental factors. For marijuana specifically, researchers have highlighted increased legalization of marijuana for medicinal and recreational purposes as a factor for low harm perceptions among youth.[36] Furthermore, growing public acceptance of marijuana has also been noted as a reason for the decrease in perceived harm among adolescents.[36]

This absence in perceived harmfulness of marijuana, despite notable decreases in use rates among RAYS students, sheds light on the potentially significant impacts that social environment and awareness of substances have on adolescent AOD perceptions. Although RAYS may play an important role in addressing use behaviors, these intermediate findings reveal the effects of the program on AOD harm perceptions was minimal. Nonetheless, more research is needed to specifically assess whether harm reduction class components may play a role in this and if not, how course components may be adapted to further target AOD use harm perceptions and awareness. It is crucial to continue monitoring AOD use rates and perceived harm over time in order to inform public health messaging and education efforts. Within the context of RAYS, it is also important that the formal evaluation consider assessing these same AOD use and perception variables at the school-wide level to compare data from the RAYS sample to the broader student body in Nevada County. This comparison will allow for a higher-level examination in order to detect any shifts in school-wide culture with regards to AOD use and harm perceptions.

Previous literature has emphasized the importance of gathering data on student experiences in restorative justice programs in order to inform adaptations and enhancements.[28] Furthermore, authors also highlight a gap in current restorative program evaluation research with regards to limited or the lack of student feedback in the form of quantitative and qualitative

data.[23,28,30] This study sought to address this gap in data collection through the inclusion of open-text and quantitative items in the posttest instrument to gather data on student perceptions of the RAYS program and their overall experiences. Items included in the survey assessed resource awareness, self-reflection of AOD use, and the likelihood of recommending the RAYS program to peers. Overall, student resource awareness increased for substance use treatment and support services. More students believed they could find a resource or individual for themselves or a peer after going through RAYS. This puts RAYS on track to meet the program objective of increasing access to and awareness of SUD treatment services (see Table A). Another quantifiable objective was to provide SUD treatment services to at least 100 students by April 2024. Based on case data, of the 63 students who enrolled in RAYS during this evaluation period, 40 were referred and participated in at least one substance use counseling session (see Table 4). Therefore, at this state, the program is just under 50% of the target goal. It is important to note that not all students who go through RAYS are diverted from drug-related disciplinary incidents, thus may not require SUD treatment services.

4.2.2 Changes in Discipline Landscape

Prior to the launch of the RAYS program, Nevada County sites reported higher overall and drug-related suspensions in relation to selected comparable sites in a neighboring county. Overall suspension counts were notably higher in Nevada County schools, reporting over double the number of suspensions in relation to comparable sites during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Nonetheless, a sharp decline in the 2021-22 academic year, after the launch of RAYS, implies some effect of the program on the disciplinary landscape in Nevada County sites. This notable reduction in the number disciplinary incidents after implementation of an RJP program

has been reported in previous studies.[12,26,27,31] Hashim and colleagues noted that at the 1-year mark after implementation of a restorative justice program, there was a significant reduction in the number of suspensions.[12] This same trend is seen in the initial decline in the number of disciplinary incidents in Nevada County sites implementing RAYS. Furthermore, Hollands et al and Gregory et al conducted comparative analyses of schools implementing RJP programs and found that at schools with no restorative programs in place, there were higher suspension rates over time.[25,27] Similarly, when comparing the Nevada County sites to the four schools in the neighboring county, there was a drastic difference in the number of overall and drug-related suspension counts, with Nevada County schools reporting lower numbers.

To our knowledge, data on drug-related suspensions has not been examined in previous restorative program evaluations. Therefore, this study provides insight into the potential impacts of an RJP program with substance use components in addressing drug-related disciplinary incidents in particular. As reported, Nevada County sites had slightly higher drug-related suspensions in the 2018-19 academic year, which corresponds with the uptick in the number of relative incidents at the state level (see Figure 1). Prior to the launch of RAYS, drug-related suspensions were higher at Nevada County sites in relation to comparable sites; however, similar to the number in overall suspensions, there was a sharp decrease in the academic year following the launch of RAYS in August 2021. In contrast, at the comparable school sites the number of drug-related suspensions nearly doubled during the 2021-22 academic year in relation to 2018-19.

Although these shifts may not be directly related to the implementation of RAYS, they may be indicators of larger program impacts on the discipline landscape at the school level. As is evident by pretest and posttest data, the majority of students who exited RAYS reported

decreased use behaviors or frequency of use. As such, these students may no longer be using, or if they are, they are choosing not to use at school where they are most likely to be caught. At the systemic level, administrators at the Nevada sites may be increasing the number of referrals they are making to RAYS from drug-related incidents. If so, this may imply an increased awareness of the RAYS program amongst school district and site staff which is crucial for program sustainability and continuous support. This increased awareness may be supported by the high number of school staff and administrator exposures to information presentations conducted by the RAYS program coordinators (see Table 4).

Past RJP evaluation studies have cited the negative impacts of punitive measures, particularly the counterintuitive effects they have in increasing the number of disciplinary incidents and repeat offenses.[12] It is evident from Nevada's suspension data that in the absence of the RJP program, there was a higher number of overall and drug-related suspensions compared to when after RAYS was launched. Furthermore, authors have noted the positive effects RJP programs in improving academic achievement among participants.[26] Although this study did not collect student academic data, it may be interesting to examine the potential impacts of RAYS in increasing academic success as students who are diverted to the program tend to stay in school rather than being sent home. Studies have also found that RJPs decrease the suspension gap between racial/ethnic minorities and non-Hispanic White students.[26] Such gaps were not noted within the Nevada County sites implementing RAYS as the majority of enrollees self-identified as non-Hispanic White, representative of the student body in Nevada County (see Table 1).

One of the objectives set by NCSOS was a reduction in drug-related suspensions by 20% by April 2024 (see Table A). To calculate drug-related suspension rates, the total number of drug-related suspensions was divided by the cumulative enrollment for the 2018-19 and 2021-22

academic years (data not shown here). Calculations revealed that in 2018-19, 6.03% of all students at the four sites were suspended for a drug-related reason, whereas in 2021-22, 2.17% of students were suspended. Based on these raw calculations, there was an approximate 64.06% reduction in drug-related suspensions among the entire population at the four sites. This supports the conclusion that RAYS is on track to meet the 20% reduction goal by April 2024 if this decreasing trend continues. This decrease in drug-related suspension rates follows similar patterns with overall suspensions seen in other studies examining the effects of RJPs on disciplinary rates over time.[12,26,31] It is crucial to continue tracking drug-related suspensions to assess potential time-dependent effects of the RAYS program across the implementation period.

4.2.3 Implementation Fidelity

The attainment of program-level goals and objectives pertaining to the timeline for program implementation, case load, and activities is discussed here. To our knowledge, few evaluation studies have examined implementation fidelity of RJP programs, only focusing on program effectiveness on student behavioral outcomes and student experiences. Nonetheless, some researchers have highlighted the critical role that implementation fidelity assessments play in evaluating program effectiveness.[21,28] Based on case and activity-level data, RAYS is on track to meet process and outcome measure goals and objectives as outlined in the original project proposal and LEP (see Table A).

Behavioral measures related to AOD use are in line with program goals and objectives of reducing youth marijuana and other drug use. Implementation of program components is also on track to meet calendar goals with respect to timeline for implementing activities and expanding access to services for students across the four sites. Program completion rates also align with the

goals and objectives NCSOS outlined in their project proposal and LEP. Another one of the program objectives was to assess changes in the recidivism rate over time (see Tables A and C). Based on data from the current evaluation period, a total of 2 students reenrolled in RAYS while 48 students exited the program. Following the recidivism rate formula in Table C, the recidivism rate for May 2021 through January 2023 was 5.13%. To ensure that RAYS will meet the 25% reduction objective, it will be crucial to monitor this rate through the remainder of the implementation period.

4.3 Strengths and Limitations

Despite having a set evaluation plan with outlined process and outcome measures with methodologies for data collection and reporting, certain aspects of the evaluation are falling short in providing the full scope of evaluating overall program effectiveness. It is important to highlight gaps and limitations in order to optimize the present evaluation strategy, while also informing future evaluations of RJP programs with substance use components. Furthermore, the limitations discussed here will help to improve current methods for data collection and reporting for the larger evaluation report to be submitted to state funders in October 2024.

One of the limitations for this study was the small sample size and low response rate attained for pretest and posttest data collected from students who exited RAYS. During this evaluation period, only 21 out of 48 students who exited the program submitted posttest responses, equating to an approximate response rate of 43.75%. This omits exit data from over half of the sample which would be crucial to provide a more accurate assessment of individual-level behavioral variables captured via pretest and posttest data. Discussions with program coordinators revealed logistical obstacles with administering post-surveys to students upon

exiting RAYS, mainly with re-contacting students and scheduling a time to administer the post-survey, which is done in-person.

Regardless, the UCSD research team is currently working with coordinators to identify these logistical gaps and revising current protocols to increase the pretest and posttest response rate. Current protocol adaptations have included providing "quick response" (QR) codes and posttest links directly to students and having them take the survey remotely. This strategy would ideally increase accessibility of the survey and would eliminate the need for an in-person administration. Nonetheless, study strengths lie in the pretest and posttest instrument design. Scales and measures were adapted from the existing 2019-20 CSTS and 2021-22 MYHB instruments which were developed and implemented by Dr. Shu-Hong Zhu's research team in measuring population-level substance use behaviors among adolescents in California public schools. Furthermore, working directly with NCSOS coordinators, the UCSD research team was further able to adapt the language in the survey instruments and optimize flow to meet accessibility needs of the RAYS students. As such, established behavioral scales were incorporated into the surveys, while also taking a tailored approach to meet program needs which ensured surveys were measuring outcomes of interest for the RAYS program and the NCSOS team.

The use of aggregate discipline data from the CDE's public data repository may also be cited as a limitation as it may not inform individual-level impacts of the program in mitigating re-offenses among students in Nevada County. Furthermore, discipline data reported to the CDE may not be representative of all suspensions or disciplinary incidents occurring at Nevada sites. Thus, more comprehensive datasets are needed to examine site-level changes in disciplinary incidents over time and to assess whether RAYS is in fact having an impact in reducing these

counts. Despite these limitations, publicly available datasets from the CDE still reveal stark differences in the number of overall and drug-related suspensions between RAYS and non-RAYS schools. These findings highlight that there is indeed some effect of the program in mitigating the number of suspensions post-launch. Therefore, it is crucial to continue examining these changes over time while working with NCSOS coordinators to gain access to site-level discipline data versus using publicly available data which may not be providing the full scope of the impacts on the disciplinary landscape in Nevada County.

Furthermore, the study being intermediate in nature may not allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the program for the entire implementation period (May 2021–April 2024). Current findings are only reporting data from a snapshot of the entire implementation period, thus excluding over one years' worth of pretest and posttest data, discipline data, case management data, and activity-level data. A complete evaluation, which will be conducted May 2024 upon completion of the grant period, will inform the entire implementation period answering more evaluation questions and assessing program status in meeting all program goals and objectives outlined in the proposal and LEP. Nonetheless, these intermediate findings highlight the potentially positive impacts that RAYS is already having with regards to adolescent AOD use rates, resource awareness, and the number of disciplinary incidents.

This is the first study, to our knowledge, to report evaluative findings for an RJP program with substance use intervention education, counseling, and treatment components. Findings from this report provide a first-hand look into the potential impacts of an RJP program for students diverted from drug-related disciplinary incidents in addressing AOD use behaviors and harm perceptions, self-responsibility, and resource awareness. Furthermore, this is one of the few studies evaluating an RJP program being implemented in a school system from a rural setting

with a prevalent marijuana cultivation industry. The results reported here may also be used to inform program development, adaptation, and implementation in settings with similar regional attributes.

Additionally, findings may be consulted for how such a program may be adapted in larger school districts that have RJPs integrated into current disciplinary policies but may incorporate these approaches into protocols for addressing drug-related incidents. This study is also unique in that it employed the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on student experiences with the RJP program. These methods have been noted as a critical data collection strategy for evaluating RJP programs, but not has been a common practice in other RJP program evaluations.[28] Other studies have examined stakeholder and participant experiences, but mostly within the context of specific program components (e.g., circles) not for the program in its entirety.[30] Darling-Hammond and colleagues utilized state-wide data from CHKS to assess student experiences with restorative programs overall; however, individual-level experiences were not considered.[26]

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Findings from this intermediate evaluation reveal that RAYS is on track to meet the majority of target goals and objectives with respect to the process and outcome measures set by NCSOS prior to the program's launch. Although harm perceptions remained stable or slightly decreased, most enrollees reported decreased use rates from pretest to posttest. This may have implications for program adaptations and the need for further assessment of harm perceptions via pretests and posttests for the harm reduction classes specifically. Nonetheless, harm perceptions of substances among RAYS students does align with other studies examining youth harm perceptions of AOD use.[36]

The implementation of RAYS seemed to also have an impact on resource awareness among enrollees with a majority indicating an increased recognition of services and support at their sites. Furthermore, suspension counts for Nevada County sites implementing RAYS decreased substantially from pre- to post-launch of the program. In comparison to schools not implementing the program, RAYS schools have fared better in terms of the counts of overall and drug-related suspensions. Additionally, the majority of enrollees reported having had positive experiences with RAYS, peer advocates, and the various program components. Qualitative data highlighted individual-level perceptions of the program in addition to providing more insight into how student experiences with program components may inform future adaptations.

5.1 Closing Comments

The current study provides a firsthand look into findings from an intermediate evaluation of an RJP program as an alternative to punitive measures to address drug-related disciplinary incidents. Despite limitations with data access and sample size, findings from this report are

promising with respect to program impacts on adolescent AOD use behaviors, resource awareness, and shifts in the number of disciplinary incidents. To optimize the effectiveness of the formal evaluation, it is recommended that site-level data on individual disciplinary incidents are obtained versus utilizing publicly available data from the CDE's repository. Furthermore, more effort is needed to increase the posttest response rate in order to ensure data for the majority of enrollees is properly captured to assess the effectiveness of the program on individual behavioral factors. Additionally, school-wide surveys to assess program awareness and support among school staff and students should also be implemented to measure changes in these variables over time.

Future evaluative studies of RJP programs with substance use components should consider the inclusion of a control group to allow for the examination of differences in outcome measures between schools implementing RJP approaches versus those that are not. This would help to better inform whether RJP approaches are indeed an optimal alternative to address adolescent AOD use behaviors and related disciplinary incidents.

APPENDIX

Table 11: RAYS program goals and objectives

Goal 1: Reduce suspension rates at the four target school sites.	
Objective A	Offending students with suspendable infractions (substance and non-substance use related) will be given the option to participate an alternative to suspension by October 2021.
Objective B	Restorative circles/hearings will be piloted at Silver Springs High School (continuation) by October 2021 and February 2022 for the 3 other target schools. Trainings at 3 other target schools in January 2022.
Objective C	Drug-related suspension rates will have decreased by 20% by April 2024.
Objective D	The completion rate of the Alternative to Suspension program will be 75% by April 2024.
Goal 2: Reduce youth marijuana and other substance use.	
Objective A	Students will have the opportunity to participate in a school-based substance use counseling program by October 2021.
Objective B	Collection of 150 pre- and post-surveys from participants in the Alcohol and Other Drugs Safety Class by April 2024.
Objective C	Collection of pre- and post-surveys from students who participated in the Alternative to Suspension program by April 2024.
Objective D	Recidivism rates (proportion of students reenrolling in RAYS out of total completions) will have decreased by 25% by April 2024.
Goal 3: Increase access to substance use and drug (SUD) treatment.	
Objective A	SUD treatment services will be offered to students at all four target schools.
Objective B	Treatment services and support will be promoted to ensure students know to access them when needed.
Objective C	SUD treatment will be offered to students participating in the Alternative to Suspension program through both group and individual sessions.
Objective D	Students will be referred to more extensive SUD services outside of the school as needed.
Objective E	100 students will have received SUD treatment by April 2024.

Note: this table has been adapted from the version found in the local evaluation plan submitted by NCSOS to the BSCC (https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/P64C2-Nevada-LEP-Final.pdf). The RAYS program is referred to as Peer Solutions in the original local evaluation plan but has since changed names.

Table 12: RAYS process evaluation measures

Process Measure	Collection Source	Collection Frequency
Count of RAYS enrollments	Case Management database: Enrollment Forms	At time of program enrollment
Count of staff trainings	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of trained staff members	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of peer advocate trainings	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of trained peer advocates	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of Restorative Circles	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of participants in Restorative Circles	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of counseling sessions	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of enrollee exposures to counseling sessions	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of referrals to external support/services	General Activity Log; Case Management database: Exit Form	At time of implementation; At time of program exit
Count of harm reduction classes	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of enrollee exposures to harm reduction classes	General Activity Log	At time of implementation
Count of RAYS exits	Case Management database: Exit Forms	At time of program exit

Note: this table has been adapted from the version found in the local evaluation plan submitted by NCSOS to the BSCC (https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/P64C2-Nevada-LEP-Final.pdf).

Table 13: RAYS outcome evaluation measures

Outcome Variable	Definition	Data Source	Collection Frequency
Suspension counts	Total # suspensions (drug-related and nondrug-related)	DataQuest CDE dashboard	Academic Years: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22
Suspension rates	Total # suspensions per school site / total student population	DataQuest CDE dashboard	Academic Years: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22
RAYS enrollee AOD use rates	Past 12-month and 30-day use of alcohol, marijuana, and vapes	Pretest/posttest surveys	Upon enrollment and upon exiting RAYS
RAYS enrollee perceptions of AOD use	Perceptions of harm of using some days or every day for alcohol, marijuana, and vapes	Pretest/posttest surveys	Upon enrollment and upon exiting RAYS
RAYS enrollee sense of self-responsibility	Sense of self-responsibility (4 items)	Pretest/posttest surveys	Upon enrollment and upon exiting RAYS
RAYS enrollee resource awareness	Awareness of mental health and substance use support services	Pretest/posttest surveys	Upon enrollment and upon exiting RAYS
Successful RAYS completions	Total # students who complete all RAYS components	Case Management database: Exit Forms	Upon exiting the RAYS program
Other RAYS completion statuses	Total # of students with partial or unsuccessful completions	Case Management database: Exit Forms	Upon exiting the RAYS program
Recidivism Rate	Total # of students reenrolling in RAYS / Total # of successful program completions	Case Management database: Enrollment Forms and Exit Forms	Upon enrolling and exiting the RAYS program

Note: this table has been adapted from the version found in the local evaluation plan submitted by NCSOS to the BSCC (https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/P64C2-Nevada-LEP-Final.pdf).

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