

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LINK CREW IN THE FRESHMAN YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL AS A VEHICLE OF CHANGE FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ADAPTIVE SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES.

Data was collected from twenty-one schools from nine different States who had participated in a Link Crew program for their freshmen. Fifteen schools of these schools provided data that could be analyzed, while six gave feedback in a more qualitative format (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: States for Which Qualitative or Quantitative Link Crew Evaluation Data was Reported.

State	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Arizona	2	0
California	3	1
Illinois	0	2
Kansas	1	0
Michigan	1	0
Minnesota	3	1
Missouri	2	0
New Jersey	1	0
New York	0	1
Nevada	0	1
Oregon	1	0
Virginia	1	0
TOTAL	15	6

Behavioral Factors:

Data was collected in one semester on behavioral factors that would have a substantial impact on the 9th grade student and on the school in terms of achievement. These factors included:

- Number of Disciplinary Referrals
- Number of Suspensions
- Number of Tardies
- Number of Absences
- Incidents of Hazing
- Number of Drop-outs

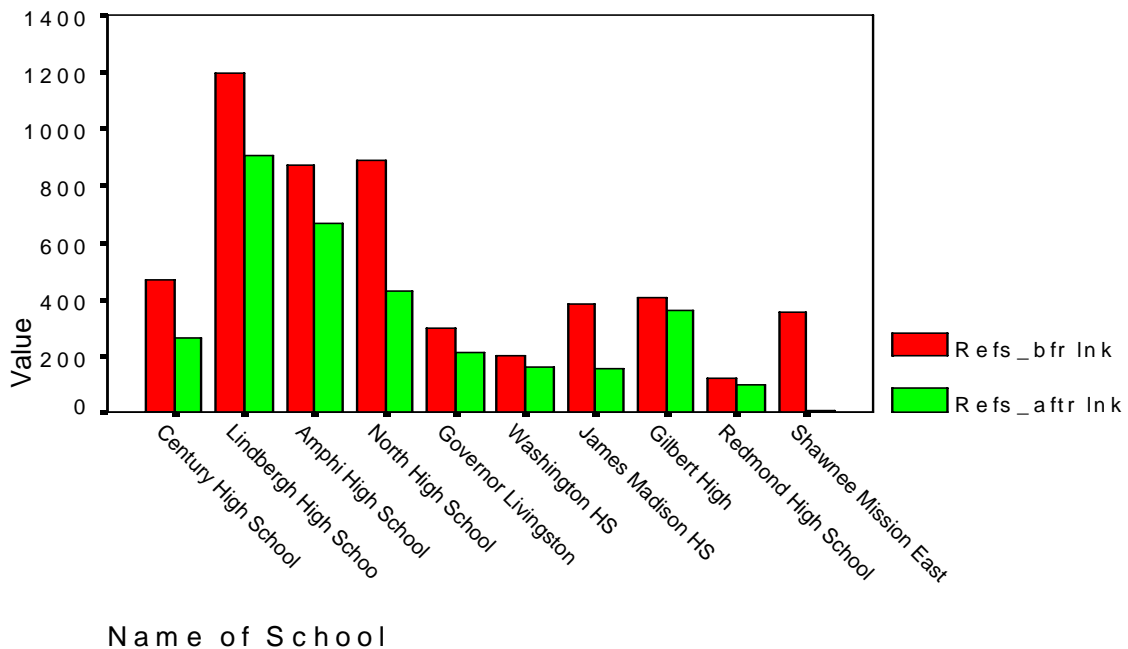
The data was recorded as a percentage change from ‘before’ Link Crew to ‘after’ Link Crew.

Referrals:

Of all the factors looked at in this survey, the number of 9th grade disciplinary referrals seemed to be the most significantly and positively impacted by Link Crew. Ten of the fifteen schools reported full data for this variable, and of those ten all reported a decrease in the number of disciplinary referrals after Link Crew had been

implemented (see figure 1 below). On average the number of referrals decreased by 37% (see table 3) with one school on the lower end showing a 12% decrease in referrals, where on the top end one school reported an almost one hundred percent turn around! The qualitative data reported by the six other schools supports these findings, with all three schools for which this data was recorded reporting a decrease in number of referrals.

Figure 1: Number of Actual Recorded Disciplinary Referrals Pre- and Post- Link Crew.



Suspension:

Suspension rates for the 9th graders declined by 20% after Link Crew had been implemented (see table 3).

Absences:

There was an overall drop of 33% in the rate of absences after Link Crew (see table 3). This finding was also reported by four out of the six schools for whom provided qualitative data.

Tardies:

Tardiness seemed to be the least of the behavioral outcomes impacted by Link Crew, although the number of tardies recorded after Link Crew did drop by 7% from a mean of 2,289 tardies recorded by 9 schools to a mean of 2,131 recorded by 8 schools (see table 3). Again, qualitative analysis of the 6 schools for which this data was provided also reported a drop in number of tardies after Link Crew.

Table 2: Mean Number of Reported Behavioral Outcomes, Before- and After- Link Crew Implementation and the percentage change.

<i>Behavioral Outcome</i>	<i>Mean Before Link Crew (n=number of schools)</i>	<i>Mean After Link Crew (n=number of schools)</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Referrals	518 (n=10)	324 (n=10)	37%
Suspensions	55 (n=9)	44 (n=11)	20%
Tardies	2,289 (n=9)	2,131 (n=8)	7%
Absences	2,072 (n=7)	1,381 (n=7)	33%

Hazing and Dropping out:

Not enough data was provided to assess the effect Link Crew may have had on number of hazing incidents or the number of freshmen who dropped out. However, the one school that recorded before and after Link Crew data for Hazing incidents reported a 65% drop in number of incidents (from 57 incidents before Link Crew to 20 after Link Crew). For the drop-out rate, the same pattern was found with the two schools reporting full before and after data showing a fall in the number of drop-outs after Link Crew (from 21 incidents to 5 in one case, and from 16 to 13 in another). Additional before and after Link Crew data is currently being gathered on hazing, bullying and dropping out.

Academic Outcomes:

Data on academic outcomes was collected during one semester before- and after- Link Crew for the following four variables:

- Number of 9th graders who had Ds and Fs
- Number of 9th graders who failed one class
- Number of 9th graders who failed two classes
- Number of 9th graders who failed three or more classes

Data was recorded as a percentage of the total number of 9th graders before Link Crew and then again after Link Crew. Based on this, a rate of percentage change was recorded by looking at the difference in the rate before Link Crew and then after Link Crew.

Full data was not available for all the academic variables from all the schools. However, overall, the findings show that academic outcomes did improve after participation in Link Crew (see Table 2). For example, eight of the fifteen schools for which data was available reported a 6% decrease in the proportion of 9th graders who had Ds and Fs on their report cards. In addition, an overall decrease of 3% was found for the proportion of 9th graders who had failed one class as well as in those who had failed in three or more classes.

Table 3: Mean Number of Reported Educational Outcomes as a Percentage of the Total 9th grade, Before and After Link Crew Implementation.

<i>Educational Outcome</i>	<i>Before Link Crew (mean %)</i>	<i>After Link Crew (mean %)</i>	<i>Net Change</i>
# 9 th graders with Ds & Fs/All 9 th graders	39% (mean=156 in 8 schools)	33% (mean=143 in 8 schools)	6%
# 9 th graders Failing One Class/All 9 th Graders	17% (mean=89 in 9 schools)	14% (mean=68 in 8 schools)	3%
# 9 th graders Failing Two Classes	Not enough data		
# 9 th graders Failing Three or More Classes/All 9 th Graders	9% (mean=51 in 11 schools)	6% (mean=32 in 11 schools)	3%

The schools for which qualitative data was recorded supported these findings in that four out of the six schools reported a drop in ‘failure rate’ after Link Crew had been implemented. Although these shifts are moderate in size, they are a move in the right direction and when considered in the light of the change in the behavioral variables after Link Crew, can be viewed as very positive.

Statistics from Individual Schools:

Southwest High School, Green Bay, Wisconsin implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2004, since then...

- 38% reduction in freshman truancy
- 25% reduction in freshman who earned F’s
- First semester freshman absences: the year before Link Crew, 144; after two years with Link Crew, 41.

Yerington High School, Yerington, Nevada implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2003

- 45% reduction in freshman referrals after one year
- 50% reduction in freshman suspensions after one year
- 32% reduction in freshman failure after one year

David Douglas High School, Portland, Oregon implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2001. Compared to same stats from the year 2000 there was a...

- 71% reduction in freshman disciplinary referrals
- 48% reduction in freshman absences

Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon, Washington implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2000

- 1999: average of 2.5 fights per week during first six weeks of school
- 2002: Zero fights the entire first six weeks of school

Henry Sibley High School, Mendota Heights, MN

Implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2002 and saw a 50% reduction in freshmen failures.

Atwater High School, Atwater, CA

Implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2000

- 30% reduction in freshmen failures
- 15% reduction in freshmen absences within the first semester

Golden Valley High School, Merced, CA

Implemented Link Crew in Fall, 2002

- 72% reduction in freshmen tardies
- 23% reduction in freshmen fights

The Boomerang Project and Applied Survey Research are continuing to collect data from schools using the Link Crew to measure changes before and after the implementation of the program.