Michigan’s Family Resource Centers: The Role of Public Human Services in Promoting Student Stability

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Family Resource Centers (FRCs) Overview

1. Special service units of Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS).
2. Provide all of the public human service programs offered at any other MDHS office.
3. Created in response to “priority schools” that had not met AYP after first year to wrap services around these schools.
Theory of Change: Direct Services to Families are Related to Academic Outcomes

1. Family functioning is a key predictor of academic success.
2. Security in basic needs is absolutely essential for school attendance and academic achievement.
3. Public human services are the main access point and provider of family supports and basic needs assistance.
Parents are already required to ensure that their children are attending school in order to receive public assistance.

Schools and public human service agencies are often working with the same families.

- Don’t always have the same information.
- Sometimes don’t have the same targeted outcomes.
- Sometimes goals even conflict.
FRC Impact on Schools

1. Mutually exclusive sets of schools that had previously not met AYP were compared.
2. FRC-linked schools were almost 4X more likely to make AYP:
   - 10.4% vs. 40.6%
Genesee Scholars Pilot Project

1. Targeted students with high mobility (3 or more moves during previous school year).
2. Families participating in DHS public assistance programs who had their rent vendored.
Genesee Scholars Project
Partners

1. Michigan State Housing Development Authority
2. Cities of Promise
3. Genesee County DHS
4. Genesee County Community Action and Resource Development
Genesee Scholars Project Process

1. Rent incentives to landlords to work with families to increase family stability.
2. Parental engagement to focus on student attendance.
3. Collaboration with Family Resource Centers to provide family supports.
Genesee Scholars Project Outcomes (after first year)

1. Significant increase in attendance at one of the pilot schools.
2. Slight increase in attendance at other two pilot schools.
3. 75% of children tested at or above grade level compare to 35.3% of control group.