

Safe Passages/Our Kids Middle School Strategy at San Lorenzo Unified School District

At the direction and leadership of Supervisor Nate Miley and Alice Lai Bitker, the Safe Passages/Our Kids Middle School Strategy was implemented in the San Lorenzo Unified School District beginning the fall of 2006. The two middle schools selected to participate based on high need demographics are **Edendale Middle School and Bohannon Middle Schools**. Over 2,000 students are currently being served at the two school sites.

The Middle School Strategy – Aims to create safe and supportive school environments and reduce the number of suspensions (particularly due to violence) at school sites. It includes:

1. A violence prevention curriculum,
2. school-based mental health counseling,
3. suspension alternatives,
4. case management,
5. parental involvement, and
6. after-school programs.

The results:

- Participating schools in Oakland experienced a **72% decrease in suspensions** due to violence¹
- Over **5,200** students and families at 11 middle schools are currently served in Oakland
- This strategy was expanded to San Lorenzo USD in the 2006-07 School Year where over **2,000** students are served.

The San Lorenzo Unified School District is requesting and appropriation from the County of Alameda, particularly \$9,000 from Supervisor Nate Miley and \$2,000 from Supervisor Alice Lai Bitker to purchase the materials to implement the Second Step Violence Prevention Materials at the two middle school sites: Edendale and Bohannon. This is a one time expense for the materials. The Violence Prevention curriculum is a crucial component of this multi-prong violence prevention strategy.

Background

San Lorenzo Unified School District (SLZUSD) is located in an area with high concentrations of poverty and crime, with significant populations of vulnerable youth and families. Further, this district, similar to OUSD at program onset, has middle school populations with high rates of suspensions for violent offenses and a scarcity of prevention and intervention support services to address the critical needs of their students.

¹ The strategy is in its 7th year of implementation in 8 of Oakland Middle Schools.

Edendale and Bohannon Middle Schools serve the students and parents that live in Ashland/Cherryland, where according to the 2001 Community Information Book, prepared by the Alameda County Public Health Department, nearly 40% of households earned an income of less than \$30,000. Although both schools have diverse populations, Latino students represent about 40% of the student population on each campus. These schools are among the top three schools with the highest rates of suspensions in SLUSD. During the 2004/2005 school year, Bohannon had the highest rate of suspensions among the district's three middle schools, with nearly 40% for violence related incidents.

Safe Passages has begun to document the impacts of the Middle School Strategy on these two school campuses, and will report on findings by next year.