

Family Connection

**Pickens County 2008-11
Strategic Plan
for the Advancement of
Children and Youth**

FY 2009 - FY 2011
(July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2011)

Plan Cover Sheet

County: Pickens Region: 1

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Section I - Community/Collaborative Context

TYP - I A. County Description

I - A. COUNTY DESCRIPTION

Pickens County, located 70 miles north of Atlanta, is making a transition from an isolated, close-knit community in the Appalachian Mountains to an exurban/suburban community with easy access to the urban culture of Metropolitan Atlanta.

Until the mid 1970's, isolation and the predominance of low skilled employment made individual self-sufficiency and ingenuity, and manual skills the top priority. This affected the view toward formal education, as manual skill, "know-how", and commonsense were more important than "book learning". Children dropped out of school early to work on the family farm or family business, or to obtain a low wage job as they started to raise their own families. High pay and high skilled jobs were limited. The marble industry, poultry farming and processing, and textiles were where the jobs were.

The urban growth of North Atlanta, the completion of the four-lane Appalachian Highway through Jasper in 1982, and the development of the internet and computer technology brought the urban culture and technological advancement to Pickens County, along with more prosperity and opportunity. There was a significant increase in retirement communities that brought thousands of retired persons to Pickens County. Many persons employed in Atlanta, who wanted to live in the peace and beauty of the North Georgia Mountains, came to live in Pickens County.

Pickens County is governed by a Sole Commissioner. The County Seat is Jasper, with a population of 2,837. Talking Rock (pop. 95) and Nelson (pop. 422) are incorporated towns with very small populations.

The Population has increased from 11,652 in 1980 to 28,442 in 2005. This includes thousands of persons 65 years old and over. The percentage of older adults in Pickens County is 13.6%, higher than the state average of 9.9%. 1.2% of the population is black; 2.7% of the population is Hispanic; 0.37% in Native American; 0.30% is Asian & Pacific Islander; 95.43% is Caucasian.

Since 1980, there has been a relatively small but important change in County demographics. The Hispanic population had grown from 0.0% in 1980 to 2.7% in 2005. There are approximately 765 Hispanic individuals living in Pickens County. The black population has changed from 2.4% in 1980 (280 individuals) to 1.2% in 2005 (341 individuals). The Hispanic population is showing growth, while the black population is declining in percentage, and remaining the same numerically.

Over the past 30 years, low wage manufacturing and agricultural employment has diminished, as the textile industry has relocated outside Georgia and the U.S. Employment in Pickens County includes the marble industry, three large manufacturing

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plants, a few small manufacturing plants that support carpet production in Northwest Georgia, poultry farming, residential and commercial construction, Pickens County Schools, Piedmont/Mountainside Hospital and growing small retail businesses to support the growing population in Pickens County.

The average weekly wage paid by employers in Pickens County is \$580.00/ week, the fifth highest in-county weekly wage in North Georgia (Whitfield County is first with \$645.00/week). Approximately 50% of Pickens residents work outside Pickens County. Access to high paying jobs in Metro Atlanta accounts for the highest median household income in North Georgia, and well above the Georgia average (but below the incomes in Metro Atlanta counties), and one of the lowest poverty rates (10.4%) in Georgia (Georgia poverty rate is 13.7%).

- However, 17.5% of children ages 0-17 in Pickens County live in poverty, compared to the Georgia rate of 19.5%. The child poverty rate in Pickens County is closer to the Georgia rate than the poverty rate for the total population. The lower wages that some parents who work in Pickens County are earning could account for the increased child poverty rate. Also, the poverty rate has increased in Pickens County from 9.2% in 1999 to 10.4% in 2004.

Pickens County is a part of the Appalachian Corridor Plateau that consists of Cherokee, Pickens, Gilmer, and Fannin Counties that is served by the Appalachian Development Highway (Hwy 515). The corridor is bordered on the east and west by larger mountains that limits access to other counties in North Georgia. This creates an Appalachian Corridor Community that links the four Counties.

The marriage of the traditional values of self-sufficiency, common sense, hard work, manual skills, and close-knit families with the opportunities of the modern, urban world has produced a dynamic community where the youth receive family and community support for their educational advancement, and where job opportunities abound, both in Pickens County and down the road in North Atlanta.

However, lingering disregard for academic education, plus the modern pressures on today's families, is causing problems for some children, youth, and families in Pickens County.

This dichotomy results in a web of strengths and challenges for Pickens County.

STRENGTHS

Relatively high level of job opportunity and prosperity (highest median household income in North Georgia; fifth highest in-county average weekly wage in North Georgia).

Relatively high High School completion rate, high test scores in elementary and middle school, high school attendance rate.

Developmental opportunities for children and youth (Boys and Girls Club,

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Mentoring, Sheriff's Explorer Program, Youth Leadership Council, 4-H, School Tutoring Program, Scouts, etc.).

Strong spirit of volunteerism and community spirit. Hundreds of volunteers support the above mentioned youth programs, the Food Pantry, Community Resource Center, and the Thrift Store (\$400,000.00 is raised annually at the Thrift Store, and donated back to community and youth programs).

A formative comprehensive substance abuse prevention strategy developed by the Pickens County Anti-Drug Coalition.

Safe community, low level of crime (except drugs and domestic violence): index crime rate has been decreasing from 2002-2006, 27th lowest rate in Georgia in 2005.

An effective Adult Education Program at Appalachian Technical College (131 GED graduates in 2006-07, highest rate in the district)

Active support of non-profits by the Chamber of Commerce and the business community (free use of Chamber facilities by non-profits).

Strong community support for addiction recovery.

Strong parent involvement and volunteerism in the schools (12,000 parent volunteer hours in 2006-07).

High level of prenatal care: well above the Georgia average.

Low rate of 2nd births to teen mothers: below the state average in 2004 and 2005.

CHALLENGES

Child Abuse and Neglect: for 2005, the abuse/neglect rate/1,000 population was 32.5, compared to 19.7 for Georgia, and has been well above the Georgia rate for the last five years.

Low level of adult educational achievement: 29.2% of adults 25 years and older in Pickens County have less than a 12th grade education, compared to 21.4% for Georgia.

Substance abuse by youth and adults: in a student survey, 10/06, 12.8% of 10th graders; and 17.4% of 12th graders, stated they had used marijuana during the last 30 days; 176 drug crimes in Pickens in 2007, including 58 drug trafficking crimes (comparative data difficult to obtain).

Low school achievement/high school dropout; the current high school completion rate, while it has been improving for the past 5 years and is higher than the Georgia average, is not acceptable to the community.

Lack of activities for children and families (no theaters, skate parks, plays, concerts, museums, etc.).

Teen Pregnancy: from 2002 -2005, the Pickens teen pregnancy rate/1,000 population is above the Georgia rate.

Lack of parent support for children with academic difficulties: this weakness identified by principals and graduation coaches.

Limited job opportunities in the County: identified as a problem by 51% of the community survey respondents.

Traffic problems (30 % of survey respondents)

Lack of affordable child care (identified as a problem by 21% of community survey respondents)

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Youth misbehavior: From 2002-07, the number of youth convicted of offenses (rate/1,000) in juvenile court has remained steady, and is just below the state average (37.18/1,000 in Pickens in 2007, as compared to 39.09/1,000 for Georgia)

Lack of supervised after school activities for children and youth (22% of survey respondents)

Limited educational support for children, such as tutoring (33% of survey respondents say they would like tutoring for their children).

Limited public transportation (21% of survey respondents).

Limited affordable housing (18% of respondents).

Limited affordable health care (27% of respondents)

Section I - Community/Collaborative Context

TYP - I B. Summary of Issues Affecting Children and Families

Narrative Summary

I-B. SUMMARY OF ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Summary of Issues is based on archival data; the Youth Risk Behavior Survey designed by the Center for Disease Control, and administered by Pickens County Schools to Pickens County students during October, 2006 (565 students responding); the Pickens County Community Survey, administered by PCFC from 4/07 through 9/07, 310 respondents; and deliberations of the Collaborative and Pickens County citizens.

The data and the perceptions and opinions of the public provide a picture of the reach and intensity of the following issues in Pickens County.

STABLE, SELF-SUFFICIENT FAMILIES - The condition of many Pickens County families is a great concern to the community. For the past five years, Pickens has had a consistent increase of substantiated incidents of child abuse and neglect, well above the state average. In 2005, the county ranked 104th in the state in substantiated child abuse and neglect cases. While Georgia's child abuse/neglect rate increased slightly from 2001 (17.7/1000) to 2005 (19.7/1000), Pickens County had a significant increase from 2001 (18.7/1000) to 2005 (32.5/1000), well above the Georgia average.

The data also shows that most of the child maltreatment incidents are neglect rather than abuse. The abuse rate for Pickens County in 2005 was 3.0/1000, compared to 3.4/1000 for Georgia. The Pickens 2005 rate is a decrease from the 2001 rate of 7.2/1000.

The neglect rate for Pickens County in 2005 was 29.5/1000, compared to 16.3/1000 for Georgia. The Pickens 2005 rate is a significant increase from the 2001 rate of 11.5/1000.

In the collaborative/community review of the data, no clear explanation emerged as to why child neglect was more prevalent in Pickens County than Georgia as a whole. One explanation was that Pickens has a well designed and implemented child abuse/neglect reporting protocol. However, this would not explain why there would be disproportionate reporting of neglect as compared to abuse.

Another possible explanation is that Pickens County has a strong Truancy Court and attendance enforcement in the schools. Truancy is considered child neglect. A review shows that in FY 06, 58% of the Pickens CPS investigations are for school age children ages 7-17, compared to the Georgia percentage of 53% for school age children. This data should prompt further review regarding whether there is a disproportionate number of CPS investigations that are for truancy in Pickens County, and could account for the

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large number of Pickens neglect cases.

The newly formed PCFC “Stable, Self-Sufficient Families” Strategy Team should conduct a comprehensive study of the child abuse/neglect status in Pickens County, which should include a multi-year breakdown of the categories of abuse/neglect and the age groups of children experiencing maltreatment.

Lack of parental education is a risk factor for their children dropping out of school, and is an indicator of low family self-sufficiency.

Parents’ education level can be a major factor in contributing to child abuse and neglect cases, as well as drug use, which will be discussed as well in this report. 29.2% of adults 25 years and older in Pickens County have less than a 12th grade education, compared to 21.4% for Georgia. In 2005, 28.6% of babies were born to mothers with less than 12 years of education, compared to the State percentage of 23.7%. 40 parents of children enrolled on Head Start, and 25 parents enrolled in Healthy Families, have not completed their high school education.

From 2002-2005 teen births (age 15-19) in Pickens County have been decreasing steadily, and at a faster rate than the declining teen births for Georgia. The Pickens rate has declined from 70.9/1000 in 2001 to 50.0/1000 in 2005. The Georgia rate has declined from 60.0/1000 in 2001 to 52.3/1000 in 2005. Pickens County is now slightly below the Georgia average. And Georgia does not compare favorably to the nation. Births to young teen mothers is considered a risk factor for family instability.

In the Community Survey, 24% of the respondents cited child abuse and neglect as an issue. 28% cited teen pregnancy.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (ADULTS AND YOUTH) - Substance abuse is a huge problem and concern in Pickens County. In the Community Survey, “Illegal Drug Use” was cited as a concern by 60% of the respondents. This was the second highest concern (#1 was “lack of activities for children or teenagers”, 66%). 26% of the respondents stated that there was a high level of drug activity in their neighborhoods, 20% said there was a moderate level. 17% said that youth were engaged in drug activity in their neighborhoods.

In the Student Survey, 12.8% of 10th graders, (10% Georgia) and 17.4% of 12th graders (15% Georgia), stated they had used marijuana during the last 30 days; 60% of 10th graders and 76% of 12th graders say that marijuana is easy to get; 9% of 12th graders say they have driven a car while drinking during the past 30 days (7.5% Georgia); 24% of 12th graders say they have ridden in a car with a drinking driver during the past 30 days (16% Georgia).

176 drug crimes were committed in Pickens in 2007, including 58 drug trafficking crimes (comparative data difficult to obtain).

In 2002-2005, Pickens ranked 150 out of 159 Georgia Counties in the number of child

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abuse cases involving drugs.

HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUT/ACADEMIC FAILURE - This issue was a concern to the community, despite the fact that academic achievement in Pickens County is high when compared to Georgia. In the Community Survey, 36% identified “high school drop-out/low student achievement” as a concern. This was the fourth highest rated issue in the Survey. 24% of the respondents stated that their child “was having difficulty with reading, math, or any other subject in school”. 33% stated that they would like their child to have tutoring help (NOTE: there is an afternoon tutoring program in the schools; school officials state that many parents of children who need tutoring do not enroll their children in the program).

The high school completion rate has improved from 60% in 1993 to 76.6% in 2007, which is well above the state average of 72.6%. However, the state does not rank well in the nation. The present rate is not acceptable, and must be improved.

Except for 3rd grade reading, reading and math CRCT test scores in the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade have improved significantly. All the above grades are from 10 to 30 % better than the state average.

Attendance has improved from 94.7% average daily attendance in 2002-03 to 95.8% in 2006-07. In 2002-03 11.3% of the students missed at least 15 days. In 2006-07, the percentage was 5.6%. The Schools and the Community feel that more improvement in attendance is needed, since poor attendance affects dropping out of school.

According to “Connected to Practice”, published by Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GAFCP), dropping out of high school results in higher unemployment, and is strongly related to substance abuse, risky sexual activity, unplanned pregnancy, unstable parenting, and involvement in criminal behavior. As the “Community Context” shows, all of these behaviors are issues in Pickens County. On the other hand, completion of high school can diminish the issues of community concern by providing more positive outcomes such as economic success, stable families, and prosocial behavior.

ADULT AND JUVENILE CRIME - Generally, crime in Pickens County is very low compared to larger urban communities, according to Georgia Uniform Crime Reports. From 1980 through 1998 the crime index (number of crimes per 100,000 population) increased from 746.65 in 1980 to 1,572.66 in 1999. Since 1999, crime has actually decreased in Pickens County to 1,472.8 in 2004 and 816.51 in 2005. The 2004 crime rate is well below the state average of 4082.1. In the Community Survey, 5% of the respondents said there was a high level of crime/violence in their neighborhoods; 21% said there was a moderate level.

The one exception to low adult crime is the higher incidence of adult-to-adult domestic violence. Over the past 6 years, the Sheriff’s Office reports a rise of domestic violence incidents from 274 in 2002 to 384 in 2006, and 325 through 11/30/07. There were 451 incidents in 2006. Comparative data from the State and other communities is difficult to obtain.

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On the other hand, while adult crime is well below the state average, juvenile arrest rates approach juvenile arrest rates for the State of Georgia. The admission rate of juvenile offenders in Pickens County in 2007 was 37.18 admissions/1,000 population, compared to 39.09 for Georgia, 50.53 for Dawson County, 21.16 for Gilmer, and 24.88 for Gordon County. From 2002 through 2007, youth drug/alcohol offences increased from 7 to 23. This is below the rates in Dawson County and Gordon County, and about the same as Gilmer County (for 2007 only; Gilmer had a higher rate than Pickens from 2002 through 2006). For violent offences, Pickens has a higher rate than Gilmer and Gordon, and a lower rate than Dawson.

In the Community Survey, 17% of the respondents reported youth drug use in their neighborhoods; 15 % reported youth alcohol use; 15% reported youth smoking; 15% reported youth out in the neighborhood late at night; 12% reported disrespectful behavior toward adults; 11% reported youth vandalism; 7% reported youth fighting; 3% reported youth gang activity.

The crime rate is low in Pickens County, and the Community wants to keep it that way. The community is also concerned about rising drug use. Dropping out of high school promotes crime and other problem behaviors. This is why PCFC wants to promote completion of high school by adopting the strategies outlined in this plan.

POVERTY/EMPLOYMENT - Pickens County faces the paradox of increasing median family income from 1999-2004 plus a low unemployment rate, and an increasing poverty rate for both the general population and children ages 0-17.

From 2002-2006, the Pickens County unemployment rate has been steady at approximately 3.6%, lower than the Georgia unemployment rate of 4.6%.

The median family income increased from \$41,387 in 1999 (ranked 30 out of 159 counties in Georgia) to \$46,504 in 2004 (23 rank). During the same time period, the family median income went from \$42,433 to 42,679 in Georgia. The fact that 50% of the Pickens population works outside Pickens County in urban counties where the weekly wages are the highest in the state accounts for this second highest median family income in the North Georgia area. Also, the average weekly wage paid by employers in Pickens County is the fifth highest of the 35 counties of North Georgia.

The higher wages both in and outside Pickens County also account for the fact that the 2004 poverty rate for the general population of Pickens County is 10.4% (17th lowest in Georgia; Georgia rate is 13.7%). However, while the median family income increased, the poverty rate also increased from 9.2% in 1999 to 10.4% in 2004. This compares to the change in the state rate from 13.0% to 13.7% for the general population. While many of the North Georgia counties saw an increase in the poverty rate, many of the counties in South Georgia saw a decrease.

Even more paradoxical is the increase in the poverty rate for children ages 0-17 from 13.2% in 1999 to 17.5% in 2004. This compares to the state rate of 16.7% in 1999 to 19.4% in 2004. While Pickens is still well below the state rate, the Pickens rate is still increasing, and at a faster rate than the State.

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The increased percentage of Pickens County students eligible for free/reduced lunches is also an indicator of increasing poverty for Children. From 2001 to 2006, the percentage increased steadily from 36.6% to 41.09%. This is lower than the Georgia's 44.2% in 2001 and 47.9% in 2005. However, the percentage for Pickens is increasing at a faster rate than Georgia.

PCFC should conduct a further study to attempt to find out the reasons for the increase in the Pickens County poverty rate in spite of the increase in family income, low unemployment, and relatively high wages.

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH/RECREATION - In the Community Survey, 66% of the respondents cited "lack of activities for children/youth" as a concern. This was the highest identified concern. 49% said there should be after school skill development programs for children and youth.

TRANSPORTATION: On the Community Survey, 21% reported lack of public transportation as a concern. 33% said that it is difficult to transport their children to afternoon, weekend, and summer activities.

Addressing the Issues

EXPLAIN HOW THE ISSUES WILL BE ADDRESS IN THE THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The three priority issues are: Stable, Self-Sufficient Families; Drug Free Life Style for Youth; Success in School. Stable, Self-Sufficient Families will be addressed by providing home based support to parents with first-birth babies, and by providing GED support to parents with children age 0-5 (through Head Start, Healthy Families, WIC, etc.) Drug Free Lifestyle for Youth will be addressed by life skills and drug/alcohol resistance skills education for 6th graders, broad based substance abuse prevention initiatives by the Anti-Drug Coalition, and by promising approaches to be developed by the Anti-Drug Coalition. Success In School will be addressed through the coordination of supports and opportunities offered to at risk middle school students through Mountain Mentors, Boys and Girls Club, the Pickens County Attendance Support Team, and the After School Tutoring Program.

The issue of youth crime and misbehavior is connected to the Strategy for Success in School, since these youth are at risk for school failure. The issues of Poverty/unemployment and Transportation are addressed through the GED support activities in the Stable, Self-Sufficient Family Strategy. The Issue of Activities for Youth/recreation is addressed in the Success in School Strategy.

TYP - I C. Documentation of the Community Assessment Process

Overall Process

DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The overall community assessment process, coordinated by the PCFC Executive Director and the PCFC President, with support from the PCFC Board of Directors, consisted of several tasks: identification of the data needed to describe the developmental progress, the quality of behavior, and the environmental conditions of children and youth in Pickens County, identification of the assessment instruments to be used; and the framework to be used to compile, organize, and present the data; actual collection and compilation of data; presentation of the data to the community for review and input; and determination of priority issues for Pickens County, based on the review of the data.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE DATA NEEDS AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS: From June, 2006 through February, 2007, the Strategic Planning Committee met seven times. The Committee decided that collection of archival data, a community survey, and possibly a key informant survey would be the instruments used to procure the data. The Committee arranged for a preliminary community assessment, based solely on archival data, which was completed on 11/7/06, by Douglas Backtel. The Assessment was very useful, but more expansive data would be needed.

FRAMEWORK/DESIGN FOR COMPILATION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA: At the May and June meetings, the Committees adopted a data design developed by the new PCFC Executive Director. The design is based on Kids Count and on a design developed by Developmental Research Programs, Inc. (the design used by the Georgia Division of Mental Health to Assess Substance Use Prevention Needs at the State and County Levels in Georgia).

The Director also worked with the Committee to develop a survey questionnaire to be used for the Community Survey. The Committee also decided to use data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, conducted by Pickens County Schools in the middle schools and the high school in October, 2006. All of these data collection instruments were consolidated into one data compilation and presentation design.

ACTUAL COLLECTION AND COMPILATION OF DATA: From June, 2007 through October, 2007, the Director worked with several instrumentalities to collect archival data, and also obtained data from several websites. The Director also worked with several agencies to distribute and collect 310 community surveys from Pickens County residents that included approximately 200 parents of children and youth. The Pickens County Consolidated Data Report on Children, Families, and Neighborhoods was completed on November 14, 2007 (20 pages, 70 data indicators).

PRESENTATION OF ASSESSMENT DATA TO THE COMMUNITY FOR REVIEW AND INPUT: The Data Report was presented to the community on November 28 at the

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Collaborative meeting. 150 members on the Collaborative email list received timely meeting notices and an email copy of the Data Report. 20 individuals attended the meeting, representing most of the agencies in Pickens County. Attendees expressed the following perceptions and opinions.

Drugs and alcohol are easily available to youth, as shown by student Risk Behavior Survey (for instance, 60.5% of the 10th graders said that marijuana was easy to obtain). Drug use by youth is excessive, as shown by the excessive juvenile drug arrests and the Student Survey (12...8% of 10th graders; and 17.4% of 12th graders, stated they had used marijuana during the last 30 days).

Excessive drug use by adults, and adult-to-adult family violence, as shown by the crime data.

Violent adult crime was seen as low compared to other communities.

Low level of adult educational attainment, especially for parents. It was noted that low education attainment of parents is a risk factor for their children dropping out of school. Poverty was not seen as a priority. Median household income was high compared to other communities. Pickens has a low poverty rate and low unemployment. Pickens has good local programs that assist families in need.

Excessive child abuse and neglect was seen as a problem. Pickens has an increasing number of child abuse and neglect incidents over the past five years, and ranks 150 out of 159 Georgia counties in the rate of child abuse/neglect. It was noted that the high rate of child abuse and neglect could be the result of a more effective reporting and investigation protocol for Pickens County.

Excessive number of births to teens.

Low number of second births to teens (Could this be the result of the Healthy Families Program?).

Low number of single parent families compared to other communities.

High level of academic achievement by children in Pickens County Schools, as compared to other communities. Representatives from the schools attributed high achievement to higher promotion standards, higher standards for special education, higher participation in the evening high school program, tutoring program, attendance support program, the High School Graduation coach, Mentoring Program, after school program, Boys and Girls Club, and an active Parent Involvement Program.

Continuing low academic achievement for some children (need to increase support for these children in the school, family, and neighborhood).

Low number of low birth weight babies.

Low incidence of STD among youth ages 15-19.

DETERMINATION OF PRIORITY ISSUES - The Collaborative met on December 13, 2007 to identify the three priority issues to be addressed in the 3-year strategic plan. 150 persons on the Collaborative email list received a timely meeting notice, a second email Data Report, a summary of the perceptions and opinions of those who attended the Data Review Meeting on November 28, and a questionnaire/ballot for an individual to identify his or her recommendation for the 3 priority issues.

52 individuals attended the meeting. The group included representatives of most of the Pickens County Agencies, and individual citizens. Each person was asked to complete a questionnaire/ballot to identify the 3 Priority issues. 48 completed ballots were

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returned. The three priority issues chosen were: Stable, Self-Sufficient Families; A Drug Free Lifestyle for Children and Youth; Success in School. The PCFC Board approved these priorities at its 1/16/08 Board meeting.

DETERMINATION OF GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS: At the 1/16/07 Collaborative meeting (27 attendees), the group provided input regarding the goals to address the priority issues, and the target groups. The group endorsed the following Goals and target groups. All parents promote and maintain clear standards and healthy beliefs and relationships in their families, and provide for the physical and emotional needs of their children (parents with first births, parents of children 0-5). All children and youth do not use drugs or alcohol (5th and 6th graders). All children will graduate from high school on time (at risk middle school students).

IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS TO GOALS; IDENTIFICATION OF SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS; FORMATION OF MEASURABLE BENCHMARK OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE BENCHMARKS: At the 2/20 Collaborative meeting (16 attendees, with five emailed inputs), the group provided the following input regarding barriers and supports and opportunities.

Goal #1 - Stable, Self-Sufficient Families: All parents promote and maintain clear standards and healthy beliefs and relationships in their families, and provide for the physical and emotional needs of their children.

Barriers - lack of initiative, and apathy; feelings of hopelessness; dependency mindset; financial hardship; low income/low paying jobs; low level of education; low job skills; limited parenting skills and home management skills; too young; too old (grandparents raising grand children); crowded and substandard housing; lack of affordable child care; drug/alcohol addiction; isolation from the mainstream community; absence of high standards for achievement and personal development; poor money management skills; dominance/control of one of the parents (in a two-parent family); spouse abuse; single parenting; lack of after school care; absence of parent/child bonding and nurturing relationship; high level of stress (especially for single parents); lack of skills to cope with stress; absence of a "support system"; lack of transportation; lack of emotional control, poor impulse control.

Supports and Opportunities - drug counseling programs; parenting programs in middle school and high school; home based and center based parenting/home management programs; intensive, small group parenting programs; mentors for parents; more creative and expansive ways to present Adult Ed/GED opportunities to parents; home based or neighborhood based GED; anger management/relationship counseling; family counseling; provide these supports and opportunities to parents early in the child's life; centralized process where a family can receive comprehensive supports and opportunities through a single coordinating source; low cost mental health services.

Goal #2 - All children and youth do not use drugs or alcohol.

Barriers - easy availability of drugs/alcohol; peer pressure; stress and depression (often

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relating to family problems); favorable attitudes toward alcohol/drug use; parental abuse of drugs and alcohol; absence of a clear standard against drug/alcohol use in the home; absence of parental supervision/oversight of child's activities; poor communication between parent/child; lack of inclusive activities for all children; absence of bonding to adults and peers with clear standards and healthy beliefs; lack of transportation to activities; lots of opportunities to use drugs/alcohol (many unsupervised drug/alcohol parties); too much advertising of alcoholic beverages that is targeted at youth; adults provide alcohol to youth; schools have too many open ways for teens to share drugs; apathy/disbelief of parents that their children engage in drugs/alcohol; addressing child behavioral problems "pharmaceutically" rather than "behaviorally"; lack of clear, positive goals and ambitions

Supports and opportunities - need more counseling for parents and their children who are using drugs/alcohol; expand Boys and Girls Club and other after school activities; expand Mentoring Program; provide transportation to these programs; drug prevention curriculum in the schools; drug prevention programs for parents; parenting programs in general; train youth to present anti-drug message to their peers; provide opportunities to youth to present message, such as in the school classroom and school assemblies, at after school activities; more community presentations of anti-drug messages; more anti-drug presentations to parents; stronger law enforcement intelligence, surveillance, and suppression of teen "drug/alcohol parties"; stronger intelligence, surveillance, and suppression of drug exchange in schools; recognition awards for stores that remove alcohol advertisements that target youth, and who card everyone who purchases alcohol; more "stings" to arrest and prosecute stores that sell alcohol to minors; more activities for youth, such as a dirt bike/4-wheeler track, access to a skate board park; more open space and larger indoor recreation space in apartment communities; more community recreation facilities.

Goal #3 - All children will graduate from high school on time

Barriers - early academic failure results in a continuous struggle through the remaining school years; support for educational achievement is not present in the home, low parental expectations; child's parents do not have a high school diploma; parents do not help with or discuss school work with child; perception of parents that their child's education and behavior in school is the sole responsibility of the school; perception of parents that decisions regarding education are the sole responsibility of the child; peers do not value education; absence of bonding with adults who have a belief in the value of education; absence of reward/recognition for academic effort; dislike of academic and mentally challenging situations; no satisfaction and pleasure from academic accomplishment; underdeveloped mental perseverance and endurance; isolation and alienation, no one to talk to about concerns and fears, feeling that no one cares; stress and depression from peer problems, family environment, etc.; ingrained belief that "I can't do it?"; absenteeism/tardiness; no transportation home from after-school tutoring; alternative education/"catch-up" programs are too expensive, with no transportation; limited cognitive skills, such as limited memory/recall, absence of analytical/synthesis skills, difficulty in assimilating abstract concepts through reading and/or oral presentation, undeveloped reading "attack" skills (breaking down words), inability to recognize and understand logical connections and relationships; short attention span,

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will not or cannot concentrate for longer periods of time; no sense of “duty” or “responsibility” to complete academic tasks, to Learn.

Supports and Opportunities - After school tutoring at school; consider “off site” tutoring, such as apartment complex community rooms, or providing transportation home from school; expand Boys and Girls Club and other after school activities; expand Mentoring Program; implement home based and neighborhood based GED/adult education programs; provide intensive, small group parenting programs, such as ?How to Help Your Child Succeed in School?, produced by Developmental Research Programs, Inc.; home based early education/family development programs; expand Head Start and early education programs; identify a specific group of children experiencing challenges to academic success and design a multi-faceted, comprehensive approach to providing supports and opportunities; provide supports and opportunities at an early age; dual enrollment in high school and Appalachian Tech; more hands on learning; more life experience learning; make school mandatory until the age of 18, not 16; no-cost or scholarships for alternative education/catch-up programs; tutoring program that concentrates on skill and motivational development rather than completing homework;

The Executive Director used this input to draft the measurable benchmark objectives and the strategies to achieve the benchmarks. The benchmarks and strategies were approved by the PCFC Board on 3/12/08 (10 of 11 Board members attending), and were presented at the Collaborative meeting on 3/19/08 (18 attendees).

Methods

a. LIST EACH SOURCE OF DATA USED TO COLLECT INFORMATION, PROVIDING DATES

The following sources were used to obtain archival data from May, 2007 through October, 2007: U.S. Census; Kids Count; Pickens County Sheriff’s Office; Jasper City Police; Pickens County Department of Family and Children Services; Appalachian Technical College; North Georgia Mountain Crisis Center; Pickens County Department of Juvenile Justice; Pickens County Needs Assessment, produced by Douglas Bechtel; Georgia Division of Mental Health’s Social Indicator Study to Assess Substance Use Prevention Needs at the State and County Levels in Georgia; The Georgia County Guide; Zell Miller Mountain Parkway Drug Task Force; Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice; Georgia Bureau of Investigation; Georgia Department of Education; Georgia Secretary of State (voter information), Pickens County Schools.

b. DESCRIBE EACH LOCAL METHOD USED TO COLLECT INFORMATION

PICKENS COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY: The survey is representative of most of the diverse sectors of the community of Pickens County. One notable exception is the Hispanic population (2.7% of the population). The Survey was designed by the PCFC Executive Director, in consultation with the PCFC Strategic Planning Committee. It was based on the Risk/Protective Factor design developed by Developmental Research Programs, Inc./Communities That Care. The Survey was distributed and collected from

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4/07 through 9/07. 600 surveys were distributed. 310 were completed and returned. Surveys were collected from the following groups: general public, 208; adult students at Appalachian Tech Adult Ed Program, 16; Boys and Girls Club, 9; Drug Court, 20; Healthy Families, 8; Homestead Apartments, 10; Truancy Court, 32. The respondents were from the following neighborhoods: Jasper, 133; Big Canoe, 9; Blaine, 1; Bent Tree, 11; Southwest Pickens, 8; Hill City, 6; Hinton, 2; Ludville, 9; Marble Hill, 13; Nelson, 4; Talking Rock, 25; Tate, 13; Yellow Creek, 3; other neighborhoods, 6; unidentified, 32. 179 respondents were parents of children ages 0-17. 110 respondents had no children under 18 years old. Several members of the Collaborative helped to distribute and collect the surveys. For the general public, 87 surveys were collected at two large community festivals in Pickens County. Surveys were collected through Collaborative members and partners, the Jasper Optimist Club, and various store locations and government agencies in Pickens County.

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY: The Survey was designed by the Center for Disease Control, and administered by Pickens County Schools to Pickens County students during October, 2006. The Survey was administered to a sample of 565 students in the following grades: 6th grade, 176 students, 84 female and 92 male; 8th grade, 171 students, 85 female, 86 male; 10th grade, 86 students, 51 female, 35 male; 12th grade, 72 female, 60 male.

FINAL DATA COLLECTION PRODUCT- The final data collection product is Pickens County Consolidated Data Report on Children, Families, and Neighborhoods, completed on November 14, 2007. The Report consists of 20 pages with 70 data indicators, and comprehensive and consolidated data from the 16 archival data sources, the Pickens County Survey, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The Report was distributed to 150 Collaborative Partners and Friends of Pickens County Children through the PCFC email list.

The PCFC reviewed and discussed all of the data at two meetings, and used the data in the process of identifying the priority issues in the Strategic Plan, and establishing goals and measurable benchmarks (.see also Overall Community Assessment Process, beginning on page 12).

TYP - I D. Collaborative Description

I - D - 1. HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF PCFC

Pickens County Family Connection, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization that was established in 1998. The PCFC mission is to organize instrumentalities, organizations, and individuals in Pickens County to provide coordinated supports and opportunities to children and youth for measurable positive development and achievement.

PCFC is governed by Board of Directors with the following membership: a retired corporate executive, the Director of Prevent Child Abuse Pickens, Inc., the Fiscal Officer for the City of Jasper, a retired community investment banker, a family representative, past Development Director for the Pickens County Government, the Executive President of the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce, the past Director of the Pickens County Health Department, Director of the Pickens County Department of Family and Children Services, and the Director of Collaborations for Resiliency in Children.

Membership composition consists or representatives from non-profits, local government, local offices of state agencies such as DFCS, law enforcement, faith community, business, family representatives, and local citizens. PCFC has an email contact list of approximately 150 persons. Each person receives timely meeting notices, minutes of meetings, PCFC monthly reports, reports of PCFC activities, and surveys, questionnaires, and information related to the strategic and annual plans.

The PCFC structure consists of the Board, which meets monthly, the PCFC General Membership, which meets monthly, and the Community Assessment/Strategic Planning Committee. The Pickens County Board of Education is the PCFC Fiscal Agent.

Primary Partners are: Healthy Families/First Steps, Pickens County Schools, Pickens DFCS, Pickens Chamber of Commerce, Appalachian Tech, Pickens County Community Resource Center, Mountain Mentors, Attendance Support Team, Pickens County Head Start, Pickens Health Department, Pickens Anti-Drug Coalition, Pickens County Office of the Sheriff, Boys and Girls Club, North Georgia Mountain Crisis Network, Appalachian Children's Center, Timothy House, Homestead Apartments, Pickens County Department of Juvenile Justice, child care centers, USDA Rural Development Program, Superior Court, District Attorney, Collaborations for Resiliency in Children. Pickens County Domestic Violence Task Force.

The major PCFC accomplishment through the years has been to work collaboratively with various sectors of the community to develop and support many new opportunities for children, youth, and families. These opportunities include: the Community Thrift Store, which is now a 5,000 square foot building, staffed by corps of 50 volunteers, and generates \$400,000 from sales of used goods which is donated to community programs; Pickens Homeless Shelter; support for Mountain Mentors, and procurement of public funding through MH/DD/AD; establishment of Medicaid Targeted Case Management (TCM), providing medical support services and referral services to families

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receiving Medicaid, and operated in close partnership with the Schools; establishment of an active Youth Leadership Council, now in its third year of youth leadership training, and is supported by the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce and several groups; establishment of the Pickens County Anti-Drug Coalition, Inc., which has organized many substance abuse prevention activities and raises funds (approximately \$25,000.00 since 2006) to support prevention programs.

Since the beginning of 2006, PCFC has begun changing direction and priorities. PCFC is moving away from operating programs, and moving toward the primary role of planning, and coordinating and linking programs to address common, measurable benchmarks and measure progress toward these benchmarks. PCFC will assist other instrumentalities and non-profits to develop funding resources, especially for collaborative initiatives that involve multiple entities working toward common goals for children and youth.

Operation of Mountain Mentors has been transferred from PCFC to Prevent Child Abuse Pickens. The Anti-Drug Coalition had recently become incorporated, and is now a separate entity from PCFC. In 2006, PCFC, and other entities across the State, lost Medicaid funding for TCM as a result of changes in Medicaid operations. The Youth Leadership Council is now operated by the Youth Leadership Advisory Council, with the Pickens County chamber of Commerce as the chair.

With this change in direction and priorities, and with PCFC no longer providing operational support for programs, there has been some confusion as to the new role of PCFC. However as close deliberations between PCFC Board/Staff and PCFC Partners regarding new results based planning begin, new teamwork relationships are being forged, anchored by common, more focused visions of development and achievement benchmarks for children and youth. There is much work to do to nurture and enhance these new relationships.

TYP - I E. Family Engagement Description and Activities

I - E. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT DESCRIPTION AND ACTIVITIES

Currently, PCFC involves families in the Collaborative in the following ways. One member of the 11-member PCFC Board of Directors is a parent representative. She has one vote, attends the meetings regularly, provides useful input, and is involved in all Collaborative decisions. For the 3 year strategic plan, parents had meaningful input through the Community Survey. PCFC received completed surveys from parents participating in the Boys and Girls Club, Healthy Families, Truancy Court, Drug Court, the Adult Education Program at Appalachian Tech, and from parents living at Homestead Apartments. Collaborative Partners have procedures to receive parent input regarding the operation and planning of programs.

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For each activity, specify the year(s) in which it will be implemented:

Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
FE1	Collaborative will assess itself on family support principles and family engagement.	X		
FE2	Collaborative will participate in training about family engagement.	X		
FE3	Collaborative will develop plan for effective family engagement.		X	
FE4	Collaborative by-laws will provide for parent/family positions on governing body and family members participate in that role.			
FE5	Family members will participate as members of collaborative committees, task forces, etc.	X		
FE6	Family members will participate as leaders or co-leaders of committees, task forces, within the collaborative.		X	
FE7	Family members will participate as leaders or co-leaders of committees, task forces of collaborative partner(s).	X		
FE8	Collaborative will establish meeting times and locations that are convenient for family participation.	X		
FE9	Collaborative will provide leadership development opportunities for families (examples: training, peer mentoring).		X	
FE10	Collaborative will establish a family advisory board.		X	
FE11	Family members will serve on interview committees to hire collaborative staff.			
FE12	Family members will serve on interview committees to hire staff in programs of collaborative partner(s).			
FE13	Collaborative will hire family members as staff.			
FE14	Collaborative partner(s) will hire family members as staff.			
FE15	Collaborative will involve families in planning process and in designing strategies.		X	
FE16	Collaborative will support family participation in collaborative meetings and in events (examples: transportation, childcare, stipends, meals).			
FE17	Collaborative will actively seek input of family members (examples: surveys, focus groups, community assessment).	X		
FE18	Family members will provide their opinions about services or programs within the collaborative.	X		
FE19	Family members will provide their opinions about services or programs by collaborative partner(s).	X		
FE20	Adult family members will be involved in programs and activities for their children and youth.	X		
FE21	Other Family Engagement activities related to collaborative development (please specify)			

Section II - Goals and Benchmarks

TYP - II A. Results for Children and Families

Goal #1 – All families will be strong, nurturing, and self-sufficient

Benchmark Objective - Reduce the rate/1,000 population of substantiated incidents of child abuse and neglect from 43.5 in 2006 to 20.0 in 2011 (Data source: Kids Count, 2006)

Indicator: Substantiated incidents of child abuse and/or neglect (per 1,000)

Benchmark Objective – Reduce the number of children age 0-3 involved in child abuse/neglect investigations from 117 in 2006 to 70 in 2011. Indicator: Substantiated incidents of child abuse and/or neglect (per 1,000)

Indicator: Substantiated incidents of child abuse and/or neglect (per 1,000), ages 0-3.

Benchmark Objective – Reduce the number of children age 4-6 involved in child abuse/neglect investigations from 93 in 2006 to 50 in 2011.

Indicator: Substantiated incidents of child abuse and/or neglect (per 1,000), ages 4-6.

Benchmark Objective: Decrease the % of repeat births to girls age 19 and under from 15.0% in 2005 to 10.0% in 2011.

Indicator: Teen mothers giving birth to another child before age 20 (ages 15-19)

Benchmark Objective: Increase the number of parents of children age 0-5 who earn the High School GED from 10 in 2006-07 to 40 in 2010-2011.

Indicator: Adult educational attainment: High school graduate or higher

Overall Three-Year Strategy # 1.1

Strategy: Provide sustained, comprehensive, services and support to parents with first-birth infants, and parents of children age 0-5 who do not have a high school diploma) to help them to develop the ability and motivation to nurture their children; and to inspire and help the parents to further their education.

Some of the underlying issues, that this strategy addresses, that prevent the high priority population of focus from being successful are: lack of initiative, and apathy; feelings of hopelessness; dependency mindset; financial hardship; low level education/job skills; limited parenting skills and home management skills; drug/alcohol addiction; isolation from the mainstream community; absence of high standards for achievement and personal development; poor money management skills; single parenting; absence of parent/child bonding and nurturing relationship; high level of stress (especially for single parents); lack of skills to cope with stress; absence of a ?support system?; lack of transportation; lack of emotional control; poor impulse control. First Steps/Healthy Families, in partnership with the Pickens County Health Department, will screen between 50-70% of the parents in Pickens County who have first-time births, using the Kempe Family Stress Checklist. First Steps/Healthy Families will provide the home based support opportunities to approximately 80 parents who have first-born infants who are at a high risk for child abuse and neglect, to help the parent develop parenting skills, and to provide GED motivation and support. The Pickens County Health Department, local doctors, Piedmont/Mountainside Hospital, and other agencies will provide referrals to Healthy Families/First Steps. Healthy Families/First Steps will assess the progress of the parents and their children. The desired results are first-time parents who develop safe, nurturing contexts for their children to grow (based on several assessments conducted by Healthy Families), and age-appropriate development for the children (based on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire). The GED Support System will include the Adult Education Program at Appalachian

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Technical College, Pickens County Certified Literate Program, Pickens County Resource Center, Prevent Child Abuse Pickens, Pickens County Head Start, Pickens County Department of Family and Children Services, Pickens County Schools, Homestead Apartments, and any other agency, organization, or apartment community/neighborhood that has contact with the target groups. Appalachian Tech, the Resource Center, and PCFC Partners will work together to identify parents who are interested in Adult Education, provide home based, neighborhood based, or center based Adult Education orientation, provide Adult Education tutoring or instruction with professional instructors or with trained volunteers at a site of the parent's choosing (home, a neighborhood center or church, or Appalachian Tech). Through the Resource Center, child care and transportation will be provided to enable parents to attend instruction sessions. Appalachian Tech will coordinate the compilation of all Adult Ed/GED referrals and Adult Ed/GED orientations from all agencies, and will keep records of the participation levels and academic progress of target group participants, including those from off-campus sites. The desired results are parents who attain the GED, and parents, and parents who complete at least one Adult Basic Education level. The target groups are: Parents with first-born infants, or expecting their first-born (priority #1), parents with preschool children age 0-5 (#2).

Target Group(s): First-time parents with infants (priority #1), parents with children age 0-5

Supporting Evidence for the Strategy:

- The Evaluation Report of Healthy Families Georgia, Tate Site (Pickens County) for the 10/1/05-9/30/06 program year states that participants who participated in the Healthy Families program for more than one year displayed positive changes in their parenting beliefs and displayed positive changes in the home environment. The majority of children enrolled in the Program were developing on schedule. The GAFCP Policy Practice Series Briefing Summary, Preventing High School Failure under No child Left Behind, Vol. III, No.4, Winter 2006, states that students who report that their parents did not graduate from high school read approximately three grade levels behind students with more educated parents. The GAFCP "Connected to Practice, Stable Self-Sufficient Families", March, 2005, recommends that to increase adult/parent education levels, communities should offer community based programs that teach parents about resources available to them complete their education, earn a GED, and/or learn the technical skills required for succeeding in the workforce. Connected to Practice cites the "Report of the Task Force on Adult Education and Literacy to the Virginia Board of Education", June, 2001 for the PCFC strategy to work with parents to improve their educational levels. The GAFCP Strategic Plan Instruction, 7/19/2007, page 21, includes home-based GED (an element of the PCFC Strategy) as a systems change activity.
Source: Center for Family Research, University of Georgia, Publication: Healthy Families Georgia, Tate Site, Evaluation Report, Author: Tracey Daniels Hickey and others, Date: 10/1/05 - 9/30/06

Goal # 2: All children and youth will not use alcohol or drugs.

Benchmark Objective: Increase the percentage of 10th graders who do not use alcohol/drugs from 70% in 2006 to 80% in 2011 (Data source: Pickens County Schools, 2006).

Overall Three-Year Strategy # 2.1

Strategy: Provide sixth grade students with a wide array of programs and support to help them value and live a drug/alcohol free life style.

Some of the underlying issues, that this strategy addresses, that prevent this high priority population of focus from being successful are: easy availability of drugs/alcohol; peer pressure; stress and depression (often relating to family problems); favorable attitudes toward alcohol/drug use; parental abuse of drugs and alcohol; absence of a clear standard against drug/alcohol use in the home; absence of parental

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supervision/oversight of child's activities; poor communication between parent/child; absence of bonding to adults and peers with clear standards and healthy beliefs; too much advertising of alcoholic beverages that is targeted at youth; adults provide alcohol to youth; schools have too many open ways for teens to share drugs; apathy/disbelief of parents that their children engage in drugs/alcohol, addressing child behavioral problems ?pharmaceutically? rather than ?behaviorally?; lack of clear, positive goals and ambitions The strategy programs/activities will include a classroom curriculum in the Pickens County Schools (Botvin Life skills) for 6th graders that teaches social skills and drug resistance skills; a series of several anti-drug/alcohol activities sponsored by the Pickens County Anti-Drug Coalition, Inc., such as Red Ribbon Week, Addiction Recovery Week, anti-drug speakers in the schools, drug prevention parent forums, and anti-alcohol pre-prom activities for high school youth; (the Coalition will compile the participation levels of children and youth in these activities); Mountain Mentors Program, which promotes bonding of children and youth with adults who have clear standards and healthy beliefs (mentoring occurs is all seven schools in Pickens County); Boys and Girls Club, which has a drug/alcohol prevention component; organize small group parent workshops on drug prevention in the family. Active members of the Coalition are from the private sector, the schools, the faith community, law enforcement, apartment communities, local government, non-profit agencies, substance abuse treatment programs. and Pickens County Family Connection. The members share resources to implement the Drug Free Lifestyle Strategy. Pickens County Family Connection was instrumental in organizing the Anti-Drug Coalition in 2006. It is now an independent organization, with a continuing close collaborative relationship with PCFC. The target groups are: 6th grade students (priority #1), middle school and high school students (#2), elementary school students (#3)

Target Group(s): 6th grade students (priority #1), middle school and high school students (#2), elementary school students (#3)

Supporting Evidence for the Strategy:

- The PCFC strategy to teach 8th grade students social skills, personal competence, problem solving skills, and how to apply these skills to peer pressure to use drugs/alcohol, was researched and developed by G.J. Botvin and others. Developmental Research Associates, Inc. (DRP) states that the research demonstrated that students exposed to the curriculum had significantly lower rates of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use. DRP states that parents participating in the program, "Preparing for the Drug-Free Years", were more likely to provide reinforcement to their children for prosocial behavior, to monitor their children's whereabouts, to report more family involvement with their children, and to engage in more proactive communication with their children in solving problems. According to DRP and GAFCP ("Connected to Practice"), mentoring programs are effective in promoting academic achievement and a drug free life style (see also Success in School). Source: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., Publication: Communities that Care Promising Approaches for Preventing Adolescent Problem Behaviors , Author: R.F. Catalano and others, Date: 1996

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Goal # 3: All Children will graduate from high school on time.

Benchmark Objective: Increase % of students who graduate from high school on time from 76.6% in 2007 to 85% in 2011. (Data source: Georgia Department of Education, 2007)

Code: CS5

Indicator: Students who graduate from high school on time

Benchmark Objective: Increase % of 8th grade students who meet state standards on CRCT from 92% in reading and 87% in math in 2007 to 96% in reading and 925 in math in 2011 (Data source: Georgia Department of Education, 2007)

Code: CS4a

Indicator: 8th grade students meeting or exceeding state standards on CRCT promotional tests in: Reading

Benchmark Objective: Decrease % of students with 15 or more absences from 5.6% in 2007 to 3.5% in 2011. (Data source: Georgia Department of Education, 2007)

Code: CS1

Indicator: Children absent more than 15 days from school

Overall Three-Year Strategy # 3.1

Strategy: Provide at risk middle school students with a support system to succeed in school, at home, and the community.

Some of the underlying issues, that this strategy addresses, that prevent the high-priority population of focus from being successful are: support for educational achievement is not present in the home, low parental expectations; parents do not help with or discuss school work with child; perception of parents that their child's education and behavior in school is the sole responsibility of the school; perception of parents that decisions regarding education are the sole responsibility of the child; peers do not value education; absence of bonding with adults who have a belief in the value of education; absence of reward/recognition for academic effort; dislike of academic and mentally challenging situations; no satisfaction and pleasure from academic accomplishment; underdeveloped mental perseverance and endurance; isolation and alienation, no one to talk to about concerns and fears, feeling that no one cares; stress and depression from peer problems, family environment, etc.; ingrained belief that "I can't do it"; absenteeism/tardiness; no transportation home from after-school tutoring; alternative education/catch-up programs are too expensive, with no transportation; limited cognitive skills, such as limited memory/recall, absence of analytical/synthesis skills, difficulty in assimilating abstract concepts through reading and/or oral presentation, undeveloped reading "attack" skills (breaking down words), inability to recognize and understand logical connections and relationships; short attention span, will not or cannot concentrate for longer periods of time; no sense of duty or responsibility to complete academic tasks, to Learn. Strategy activities include In-School Tutoring, the School Attendance Support Team, Boys and Girls Club, Mountain Mentors, and the parent workshop series, "How to Help Your Children in School". The primary target group is middle school students who manifest problems or incipient problems in school. The desired results are improved grades, improved test scores, improved attendance, improved school behavior, and improved peer relationships. The identified partners will consult with each other regarding the challenges facing each child, and the compilation of data to measure results.

Target Group(s): Middle school students who are experiencing low grades, low test scores, low attendance, or social/behavior challenges

Supporting Evidence for the Strategy:

- Mountain Mentors – "Connected to Practice", published by Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GAFCP), states that mentoring, a one-to-one caring and supportive

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relationship between a caring adult based on trust, is a promising approach to promote on-time completion of high school. Bonding with a caring adult can help a student assimilate clear standards and healthy beliefs that lead to educational achievement and social competence. Attendance Support Program – “Connected to Practice” states that students with the highest truancy rates have the lowest academic achievement and are most likely to drop out of school (Colorado Foundation for Families and Children, 1999). The Attendance Support Program implements several actions that work in improving school attendance: increasing parent involvement, increasing collaboration, setting tangible goals, referring students to additional supports and opportunities, and tracking improvements in attendance. Boys and Girls Club - The Boys and Girls Club is an after school developmental and recreational program. According to “Communities That Care Prevention Strategies That Work?” published by Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., 1996, after school recreational programs can be effective in diminishing three risk factors that lead to Dropping out of school: Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior, Rebelliousness, and Friends Who Engage in Problem Behavior. This is accomplished by offering opportunities for youth to interact with prosocial adults and peers and learn new skills in a safe, supportive environment. In-School Tutoring - Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. (DRP), reports that several studies of peer tutoring and tutoring by adults have shown positive effects on academic achievement one to two years following tutoring. DRP identifies two of these studies. How to Help Your Child Succeed in School - DRP reports that when used as part of a comprehensive intervention with teachers and parents, this program has been positively correlated with parent reports of frequency of their interaction with teachers, educational expectations for their child, and perceived consistency of views of parents and teachers.

Source: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., Publication: CTC Prevention Strategies: A Research Guide to What Works, Author: R. F. Catalano and others, Date: 1996

Section III - Sustainability

TYP - III A. Collaborative Development

III-A. COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The strengths of Pickens County Family Connection are: a developing understanding and appreciation of the importance of common, measurable goals, and a clear path toward a common vision; desire and energy to organize multi-agency/organization initiatives to address problems and provide opportunities (this is seen in the Pickens County Anti-Drug Coalition, the Pickens County Youth Leadership Council, and the implementation of the Community Survey); an understanding of the importance of Collaborative meetings and Board meetings that promote networking and promote the slow but steady convergence of isolated and unconnected opportunities and supports for children, youth, and parents; a growing willingness to provide and analyze data; new participation from those who are promoting parent involvement in the neighborhood and the collaborative (in particular, the management at Homestead Apartments).

The major weakness is the underdeveloped structure and technical skills and abilities, and time restraints, to articulate and promote the actions and relationships that are needed to advance the process of merging and directing opportunities and supports toward our children and youth.

The basic need that should be addressed over the coming three years is to develop a structure whereby much more of the community perceives and shares common goals toward a common vision, where process and outcome data from the host of supports and opportunities is shared and analyzed, and where the results and achievements of children, youth, and parents are showcased in the community. The PCFC should continue to work to accelerate this formative process and structure. The Strategy Teams will be the lead groups to facilitate this process.

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For each activity, specify the year(s) in which it will be implemented:

Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
Governance				
CA1	Develop collaborative membership requirements.			
CA2	Develop collaborative by-laws, written procedures and/or policies.			
CA3	Develop executive or governing board/body.			
CA4	Develop sub-committee structure (examples: finance, evaluation, personnel).	X		
CA5	Develop member roles & responsibilities.	X		
CA6	Broaden collaborative membership to reflect all segments of the community.	X		
CA6a	Include youth in the collaborative .	X		
CA6b	Include business representatives in the collaborative.	X		
CA6c	Include local government representatives in the collaborative.			
CA6d	Include faith community representatives in the collaborative.	X		
CA6e	Include family representatives in the collaborative .	X		
CA6f	Include other underrepresented community sector in the collaborative.	X		
CA7	Develop and implement training for collaborative members.	X		
CA8	Link with other collaboratives within the county.			
CA10	Other collaborative development activity related to governance.			
Strategic Planning				
CA11	Conduct comprehensive community assessment managed by the collaborative.			X
CA12	Develop groups to plan, manage and implement strategies (examples: task forces, strategy teams).	X		
CA13	Develop a process to review and modify the strategic plan on a regular basis.	X		
CA14	Develop best practice strategies based on research.	X		
CA20	Other collaborative development activity related to strategic planning.			
Evaluation				
CA21	Provide evaluation findings to collaborative on a regular basis.	X		
CA22	Complete and distribute collaborative reports (examples: results report, Kids Count Fact Sheet, collaborative annual report).	X		
CA23	Develop a system for keeping records and sharing data for evaluation.	X		
CA24	Designate roles and resources to conduct strategy level evaluation.	X		
CA30	Other collaborative development activity related to evaluation.			
Finance				
CA31	Complete community resource map to determine the level of resources			

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Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
	directed toward a specific strategy.			
CA32	Conduct cost analysis of prevention strategies by the collaborative.			
CA33	Redirect existing funds controlled by the collaborative to support plan implementation.			
CA34	Local partners support collaborative strategic plan implementation (examples: staff, funding).		X	
CA35	Partner agencies work together to develop resources (examples: joint grant writing or fund raising).	X		
CA36	Develop long term financing/sustainability strategies for the collaborative process.			
CA37	Allocate local government funds received for the implementation of the community plan.			
CA40	Other collaborative development activity related to finance.			
Administration and Operation - Communication				
CA41	Create collaborative publicity material (examples: logo, brochure).	X		
CA42	Regularly inform the community about conditions for children and families.	X		
CA43	Create and distribute resource guide and/or directory of agencies/services.			
CA44	Utilize a website for communication.	X		
CA50	Other collaborative development activity related to administration and operation.			
CA60	Other activity related to Collaborative Development.			

TYP - III B. Resource Development and Sustainability

III-B. STRATEGY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The “Strong, Self-Sufficient Families” Strategy Team will mobilize resources to implement, sustain, and enhance the strategy to help the target group of parents to develop the ability to nurture their children, and to further their own education.

The Healthy Families/First Steps Program has been funded for several years to help 70 at-risk parents with first-birth infants to learn to nurture their children and further their own education. The Strategy Team will submit continuation funding applications to the Governor’s Office for Children and Families (GOFCE), and other current funding sources. Resources are currently lacking to serve an additional 70 at-risk families with first-birth infants. The newly formed Strategy Team will begin the process of seeking out sources for additional funding to provide more staff to provide home based support to the unserved at risk parents/families. The Strategy Team will work with the Success in School Strategy Team and the Drug Free Lifestyle Strategy Team to submit an application for the Caring Communities for Children and Communities” competitive grant, which is being offered by the Governor’s Office for Children and Families.

The Strong, Self-Sufficient Families Strategy Team will also mobilize community resources to inform, motivate, and support parents of children age 0-5 to return to Appalachian Tech to further their education by studying for the GED and enrolling in technical education. The Team is currently working on a resource mobilization plan that would include the training of the wide array of agency personnel that work with the target group to provide well prepared Lifelong Learning Orientations for the target group; the production of a DVD video that promotes life-long learning featuring testimonials of local GED graduates; volunteer Adult Learning Mentors who can provide support and encouragement to active and potential adult students; the establishment of satellite centers, with transportation, at churches and community buildings where child care is available while parents receive GED instruction from volunteers and Appalachian Tech staff. The target date for completion of the plan is October, 2008.

During the next three years, PCFC will also engage in several resource development activities.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CENTRALIZED CONSOLIDATED ARCHIVAL AND SURVEY DATA BASE: PCFC will refine and enhance the present Centralized, Consolidated Archival/Survey Data Base. The existing data base, completed in November, 2007, consolidates data from over 20 different sources. The Data Base describes the development progress, the behavior and the achievements of children and youth, and describes the environmental conditions of children and youth within their domains of the neighborhood, family, school, and peer group. This consolidated data is essential to the success of funding proposals that must describe the current status and conditions of children and youth. All instrumentalities and nonprofit groups have access to this

Name of County: Pickens

consolidated data base.

COMPREHENSIVE, CONSOLIDATED DOCUMENTATION OF MEASURABLE BENCHMARKS: The 2008-11 Plan presents common measurable benchmarks that the collaborative Partners have agreed to pursue. Documentation will take place through the activities of three Strategy Teams: the Stable, Self=Sufficient Families Strategy Team; the Drug Free Lifestyle Strategy Team; and the Success in School Strategy Team. Strategy teams will consist of the directors of the agencies that provide the supports and opportunities, program participants, and community supporters of the strategy. The strategy teams will collect and consolidate the program data that measures progress toward benchmarks, will monitor progress toward benchmarks, will present regular progress reports to the community, and will showcase the progress and achievements of the children and youth. The data analysis and progress of the strategy teams becomes a core element for funding initiatives and proposals to sustain and advance the strategies.

CONSOLIDATED COMMUNITY DATA BANK OF FUNDING RESOURCES: PCFC will establish a Community Data Bank of Funding Resources. The PCFC Executive Director will work with Collaborative Partners to identify public, private, and local funding resources, contact procedures for each resource, the funding guidelines and areas of interest for each resource, and the funding protocol for each resource. Collaborative Partners and others in the community can then use the Resource Bank to locate funding opportunities to sustain and advance the strategies, and other programs.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONSOLIDATED, COLLABORATIVE FUNDING APPLICATIONS: PCFC will facilitate the development of funding applications that support and enhance the multi-program implementation of the strategies contained in the 2008-11 Plan.

TYP - III C. Community Engagement

III-C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. COMMUNITY OUTREACH; COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PLANS

There are several ways that PCFC will involve the community in the strategic and annual plan: activities of the three Strategy Teams, described in Section III-2; expanding the distribution of the Community Survey to include at least 600 respondents, and directed at specific target groups; institute questionnaires and focus groups with strategy program participants; presentation and discussions with various organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, civic clubs, homeowner associations, apartment communities, PTA, etc.

2. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY REGARDING PROGRESS TOWARD BENCHMARKS

PCFC will engage in several activities to report benchmark progress to the community: quarterly news releases to the media; sustained reporting of benchmark progress toward through the PCFC email network (expand network from 150 to 500); news releases to the news media; strategy progress and activity reports at the monthly PCFC Board meetings and the monthly general collaborative meetings; direct presentations to key local government leaders; posting progress and activity reports on the PCFC web site; publication of progress and activity reports in various organization newsletters, Chamber of Commerce, PTA, etc.