



The ESS Report

Partnering with School Professionals To Provide Quality Cost-Saving In-District Clinical Services for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems

The Keys to Reducing Out-of-District-Placements

The mission of Effective School Solutions is to provide state-of-the-art mental health programming and related services for students with significant emotional and behavioral problems that are impacting their education, putting them at -risk for out-of-district placement.

ESS has created an entirely unique approach to working with these students and has a very strong track record in essentially ending the need for placements. During the 2015-2016 school year, only 2.75% of the 888 students served by ESS needed such a referral. This success makes a huge contribution to a district's goal of educating students in the least



restrictive environment, which in turn reduces the placement budget and frees up monies to be used for other needed services.

While there are numerous factors that contribute to the success of ESS in this area, the organization sees a number of key factors that have the greatest impact. These include:

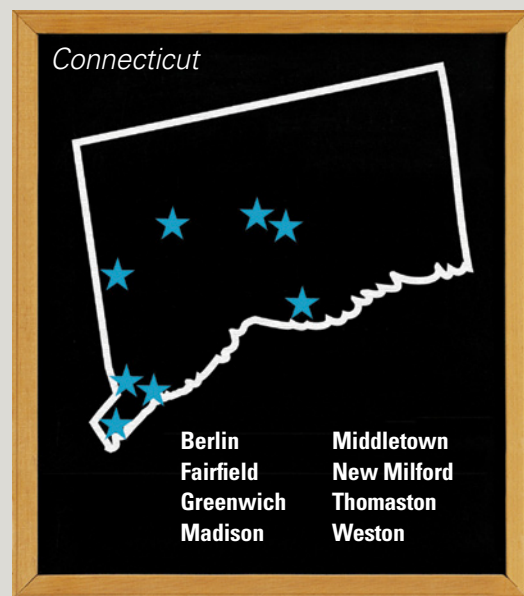
- 1. Focused Clinical Assessments:** ESS conducts initial and on-going clinical assessments designed to identify overt and covert emotional factors that frequently lead to an out-of-district placement after impacting the student's educational and social functioning. These factors become the core areas targeted in ESS treatment plans.
- 2. Comprehensive Treatment Protocols:** ESS has developed a proven and structured treatment program that is grounded in research and many years of clinical experience. ESS does not simply hire staff and place them within the district, leaving them to figure out on their own how to work with at-risk students. Rather, ESS staff deliver a high quality program in which they have been thoroughly trained, one that ESS knows makes a huge difference for students struggling to stay within the district.

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"This success makes a huge contribution to a district's goal of educating students in the least restrictive environment, which in turn reduces the placement budget and frees up monies to be used for other needed services," says ESS Founder, David Nyman, Ph.D.

ESS AT A GLANCE

Founded in NJ in September, 2009, ESS offers school districts an opportunity to dramatically reduce the costs of special education while significantly increasing the quality of its services for students with emotional and behavioral problems. ESS expanded to Connecticut in the 2015-2016 school year by establishing programs in 4 districts. For the current school year, ESS has added 4 new districts and is now providing services in 11 schools in 8 Connecticut school districts as part of its overall roster of 56 schools in 35 school districts. Programming includes the delivery of intensive mental health services for students and families, in-service training for educational staff, and other services which enable the student to be educated within the public school setting rather than requiring an out-of-district placement. In addition, ESS provides not only experienced clinical staff, but sound oversight and a mature system of quality and risk management that cannot be found elsewhere.



Family Services: Making the Difference

Family Services are critical to the success of ESS programming and its ability to help students thrive in their home districts. "Family Services make all the difference and help create a positive home environment that is supportive of the student's growth not just as a young adult but also as a student," says Jerry Barone, LCSW, the Executive Director of ESS and leader of the team that crafted the ESS approach to working with families.

Family Services help parents learn how to productively support their struggling child and build healthy and positive family relationships, which in turn helps free up the student to focus on his/her schoolwork.

ESS Family Services consist of individual family therapy, a Parent Psycho-Educational Support Program, a parent monthly newsletter and on-going phone consultations.

Family Services are available in the day and evening to make it easier for parents to participate. Family therapy, provided no less than twice per month throughout the school year, offers an opportunity for families to identify and make progress on specific problems between parent and student. The Parent Psycho-Educational Program is offered monthly and follows structured and detailed protocols that have been developed by ESS. Each month a different topic is covered through lecture or video and handouts, followed by group discussion and support. This program is supplemented with the distribution of *Solutions*, a monthly ESS newsletter for



parents providing useful information and concrete suggestions on topics highly relevant to parents of students with emotional and behavioral problems. All of these clinical services are reinforced through frequent phone contact between ESS

clinicians and parents. Each student's progress is carefully reviewed and parents are helped to problem-solve any immediate challenges.

ESS Family Services also have the ability to change the dynamic between a frustrated parent and the district. "Parents sometimes incorrectly look to blame the district for their child's troubles but, once ESS starts working with them, these parents come to value the district for providing these services. Parents come to feel indebted rather than adversarial," adds David Nyman, Ph.D., the founder of ESS.

A Letter From a Parent

ESS often receives letters from grateful parents. Here is one of them, with some changes protecting the student's identity and district.

Dear ESS Leadership,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my thoughts on how wonderful our experience has been with ESS.

When my daughter enrolled in the ESS program, she had severe anxiety and school refusal issues. My daughter immediately bonded with the ESS counselors. I am not surprised because of their caring nature and supportive style, along with a no-nonsense approach. Not a surprise that the counseling has been outstandingly effective. In our family, we refer to ESS as a savior. ESS has essentially saved our daughter. Daily interactions, needed interventions, home visits to get our daughter to school, while helping us with parenting that aligned with our daughter's life at school are just a few of the most important elements that turned things around for us. Our daughter is in a much better place and I give all the credit to district administrators, leaders and ESS counselors. ESS is a great program with excellent staff.

I am eternally grateful to you, the school, and district leadership for making this happen for my kid and all other kids who are benefitting in the program. I want to thank you again for bringing ESS into our daughter's life.

*Sincerely,
ESS Parent*

ESS: The Data Says It All

ESS Prevents Out-of-District Placements, Helps Students Successfully Return From Extended Home Instruction and Dramatically Improves Grades, Attendance and School Behavior

Since its inception in September 2009, ESS has tracked every student who has received services and collected objective measurements about the impact that ESS programming has had on the students. This focus on objective measurement is a key part of the organization's commitment in evaluating its own services and sharing the data with school and district leadership.

As can be seen in the table below reporting on the 2015-2016 school year, ESS programming has a dramatic and positive impact on

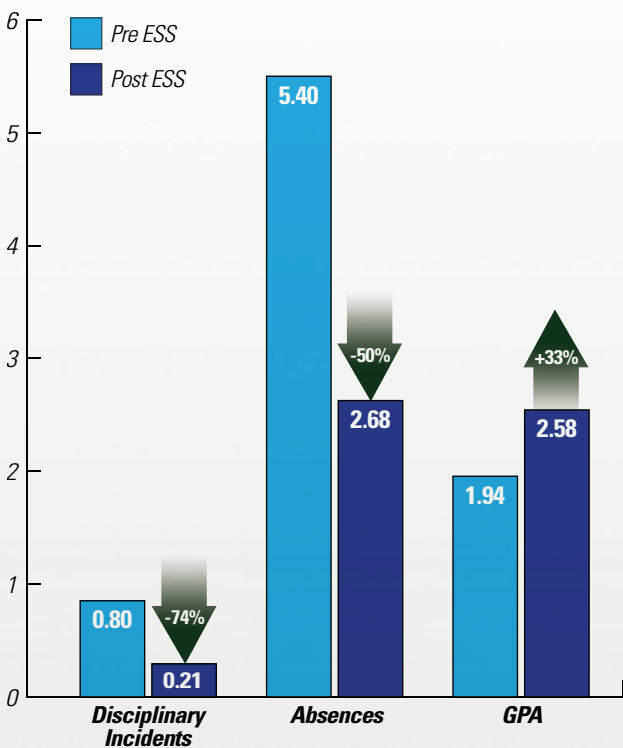
students receiving its programming. The need for out-of-district placements is essentially ended; only 2.75% of ESS students received such a placement and 95% of students returning from extended home instruction or a placement were successfully reintegrated within the school structure. "We are so proud of this track record, knowing that the work we are doing allows our students to stay in the district, benefit from everything that the district can provide and never need to take that little bus to the

special education school," says Jerry Barone, LCSW, and the Executive Director of ESS.

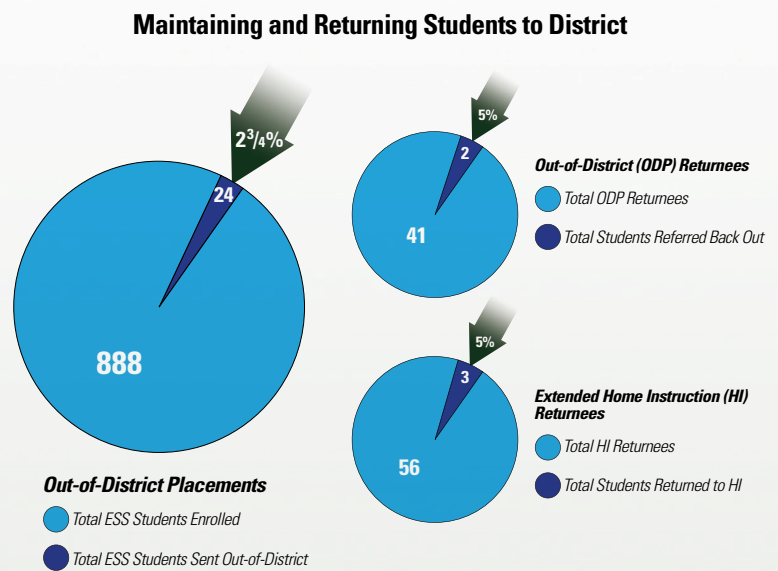
However, the success of ESS programming is much broader than just preventing placements. Also, as seen below, the grades of ESS HS students increase, on average, by 33%, absences decrease by 50% and disciplinary incidents are reduced by 74%.

The data for specific ESS school districts is shared with the district several times per year and provides critical feedback for school and district leadership.

Effective School Solutions 2015-2016 Results



Above data represents the average of ESS high school student performance over the four marking periods of the school year.



The Keys to Reducing Out-of-District-Placements Continued from page 1

3. Immediate Availability: ESS staff is always ready to provide urgent intervention and support for students in crisis during the school day and at night. Frequent visits, as often as between each period, and classroom intervention are part of the core ESS clinical approach, as are evening phone calls with parents and students. All of this is designed to help students overcome the kind of acute crisis that can spiral into bigger struggles and then, placements.

4. Specialized School Avoidance Protocols: The ESS school avoidance protocol includes a variety of measures to ease a student's transition into consistent school attendance, such as specialized parent assessments, home visits, increased family sessions, and literally meeting the student at the door each morning. ESS has a special tracking system for all of its students with school avoidance and each of these students receives special monitoring to identify any emerging new or returning struggles, all with the goal

of helping the student stay within the public school setting.

5. Successful Psychiatric Referrals: In many instances, out-of-district placements result from students not receiving the medications that they need. ESS has developed highly successful techniques and protocols to ensure that parents comply with the need for their child to see a psychiatrist. Much of this work is accomplished through on-going family therapy and the strong positive relationships that ESS staff develop with parents.

6. Coordinating with School Professionals: ESS staff work very hard to coordinate with school leadership, special services professionals and teaching staff to ensure all involved share the same understanding of how best to help the student when he/she is struggling in the school setting. The progress of each student is reviewed during frequent team meetings that include school leadership, CST members and others, along with ESS staff.

7. Supporting Teaching Staff: Through on-going in-service trainings and specific student consultations, ESS plays an important role in helping teachers develop the knowledge and skills to work effectively with at-risk students in the classroom. This in turn helps support an overall school culture supportive of these students and makes them feel welcomed and supported.

8. Positive Behavioral Support System: The ESS Level System helps students stay on track by providing weekly feedback on their progress toward the goals that have been identified to help them thrive within the public school system.

When beginning to work with a student, it is sometimes not clear which of these specific steps will make the difference. However, it is clear that, taken together, these steps change the lives of students who, without ESS, would be destined for placement.

What Parents are Saying

"I can't say enough about the ESS program...I knew my son had it in him but it takes special people like you to pull it out of him...you are making our son the best he can be."

"We are grateful our son has had the opportunity to make a successful transition back to Montclair HS with the help and support from the ESS program... Thank you so much!"

What Students are Saying

"I never thought therapy and school would mix, but it seems to. I like knowing that I have someone to talk to during the day if I need to... and groups are pretty cool."

"ESS helps me get through the day."

ESS is now scheduling consultations with new districts interested in learning more about ESS programming.

For an initial consultation at no cost, please call (973)-299-9954.

The logo for Effective School Solutions (ESS) features the letters 'ESS' in a bold, stylized font. The letters are white with a blue outline and are set against a background of horizontal blue lines.

**EFFECTIVE
SCHOOL
SOLUTIONS**

25 Deforest Ave, Suite 310
Summit, NJ 07901
Phone (973) 299-9954

www.effectiveschoolsolutions.com