

TITLE IV SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

EVALUATION REPORT, 2000-2001



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

**AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
JUNE 2002**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Austin Independent School District (AISD) has received federal funding through the Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant since the 1987-88 school year. The purpose of the SDFSC grant is to supplement state and local educational organizations' efforts towards education on and prevention of drug abuse and violence. During the 2000-01 school year, AISD received a total Title IV grant of \$737,712, which was utilized through districtwide student programs and support services as well as campus level initiatives. In conjunction with other federal and local grants, as well as with the support and services provided by community agencies, AISD provided drug and violence prevention education and programming to sustain and buoy identified protective factors for over 80,000 students within AISD and in the private, non-profit, and delinquent facilities within the district's boundaries.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Substances. Taking student population growth into account, the number of discipline referrals in AISD for the use or possession of any substance, including tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and all other illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, ecstasy, etc.), have remained relatively stable since 1998-1999. However, while AISD students typically report approximately equivalent or slightly less substance use than a national sample, the 10th grade cohort showed significantly elevated use in relation to the national comparison group in 2000-2001. As expected, self-reported grades and substance use were inversely related, as were self-reported perceptions of parental involvement and substance use. Interestingly, there is incongruence between student perceptions of the dangers of substance use and their reported behaviors; specifically, many report that they use substances despite their belief that the substances are dangerous.

Safety. While the overall number of assaults on campuses decreased 6% between 1999-2000 and 2000-01, this was based on a significant decrease in the number of assaults on staff, despite a small increase in the number of assaults on students. In addition, the number of discipline referrals for weapons possessions, while relatively small, more than doubled those reported in the previous year. Still, the majority of students (54%) and staff (79%) surveyed at AISD report feeling safe or very safe when they are at school.

PROGRAMS

During 2000-2001, the districtwide student programs (PAL, ROPES, and INVEST/Positive Families) worked with over 5,600 students as well as many staff members and other adults. While discipline data were inconclusive for the PAL and ROPES programs, surveys indicated that both programs were perceived as beneficial and enjoyable experiences for students and adults alike. The INVEST and Positive Families program proved highly successful in reducing both recidivism to the Alternative Learning Center and the number of discipline referrals for student participants. In addition to the districtwide programs, each campus in AISD was allotted funds with which to conduct their own student program initiatives based on individual campus needs. Overall, campuses reported positive outcomes as a result of their programs, including decreased discipline referrals and increased student knowledge about the dangers of substance use.

Support services also contributed to districtwide prevention efforts. School Support Community Specialists provided consultation and technical assistance to individual campuses regarding the effective use of their campus funds. Two drug prevention counselors provided service referrals and other focused services at two AISD schools with high at-risk student populations, and one program specialist in Guidance and Counseling provided curriculum support and leadership regarding promoting healthy, safe schools to all AISD school counselors. In addition, Title IV funds were utilized to support professional development (Project ALERT and Making Healthy Choices training) and Health and Science curriculum specialists.

The AISD Title IV Advisory Council provided a monthly forum for required input and collaboration from community agencies. Many of these agencies (e.g., Lifeworks, Safe Place, Communities in Schools, and YWCA) partnered with the district by providing in-kind services at numerous AISD schools. In addition, stakeholders within AISD, such as individuals supported by other federal and local grants that have overlapping goals (e.g., the Middle School Coordinators and Elementary School Counseling grants), participated in the Advisory Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation of each component of the AISD Title IV program was conducted using multiple sources of data. District discipline data were a primary source of information regarding the incidence rates of violence and substance use and possession on campus. A districtwide student survey of 6th-12th graders was also conducted to determine attitudes regarding school safety and substance use as well as self-reported prevalence of substance use. This survey provided a basis for comparison to similar national data. In addition, several program-specific surveys were administered to examine the reported experiences, benefits, and areas for improvement of the various programs being implemented at AISD. Based on findings from this evaluation, several recommendations are made.

1. Improve coordination and supervision of Title IV programming.

Overall, the greatest need found for the Title IV grant implementation is improved coordination and supervision of Title IV programming to ensure effective use of SDFSC funds in the district. While this need is present across many areas of the grant, it was most prevalent in regards to the ROPES program and the School Support Community Specialists (SSCS) staff positions. These areas are supervised by multiple individuals with varying degrees of investment and expertise in the arena of drug and violence prevention. Regarding the ROPES program, poor coordination between departments has contributed to conflicting and counterproductive efforts towards the same goals. In the case of the SSCS positions, poor coordination has resulted in the district being at risk of noncompliance with grant requirements.

2. Provide more guidance to campuses to assist their planning of prevention activities.

Individual schools could more effectively utilize their SDFSC funds if they had additional information about the specific needs of their campus as well as about programs geared toward meeting those specific needs. One way to help campuses better understand their needs is to provide them with campus level data regarding substance use and violence trends in conjunction with both districtwide and statewide data. In addition, more structured guidelines should be put into practice regarding the programs that may be implemented at the campus level. Specifically, campuses should be limited to utilizing only a select group of pre-approved research-based programs such as those on the US

Department of Education's list of exemplary and promising programs.

3. Align salaries of support personnel to be proportionate to the amount of effort toward and responsibility for SDFSC grant goals and objectives.

In the case of both the counseling and curriculum staff funded by Title IV, the district is at risk of noncompliance regarding supplanting district with federal funds. One possible solution to this problem is to allocate funds for salaries according to the proportion of the job directly related to SDFSC activities, i.e., reduce the proportion of each salary funded by Title IV. This seems to be the best solution for the curriculum and counseling specialist positions because they have additional duties that would be difficult to delegate to other positions. Another possibility is to limit the activities performed by support personnel funded by Title IV to be job tasks that are exclusively related to SDFSC. This is likely the best solution for the two campus counselor positions in particular because these counselors are supplemental to the counseling staff that are already in place at Garza and the Alternative Learning Center.

PREFACE

In compliance with the federal Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) legislation, state law, and district mandates, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) Title IV SDFSC program is evaluated by staff in the Office of Program Evaluation within the district's Division of Accountability and Information Systems. Some of the outputs of the evaluation include a standardized report to the Texas Education Association (TEA), the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) addendum, as well as this narrative report. Specifically, this report helps to fulfill some of the requirements of the Principles of Effectiveness (see below), mandated by the federal grant, including the needs assessment, program development, and evaluation of progress.

SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVENESS (JULY 1998)

Principle 1: A grant recipient shall base its programs on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served.

Principle 2: A grant recipient shall, with the assistance of a local or regional advisory council where required by the SDFSCA, establish a set of measurable goals and objectives, and design its programs to meet those goals and objectives.

Principle 3: A grant recipient shall design and implement its programs for youth based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the programs used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior among youth.

Principle 4: A grant recipient shall evaluate its programs periodically to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives, and use its evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen its program, and to refine its goals and objectives as appropriate.

Source: U.S. Department of Education (1998)

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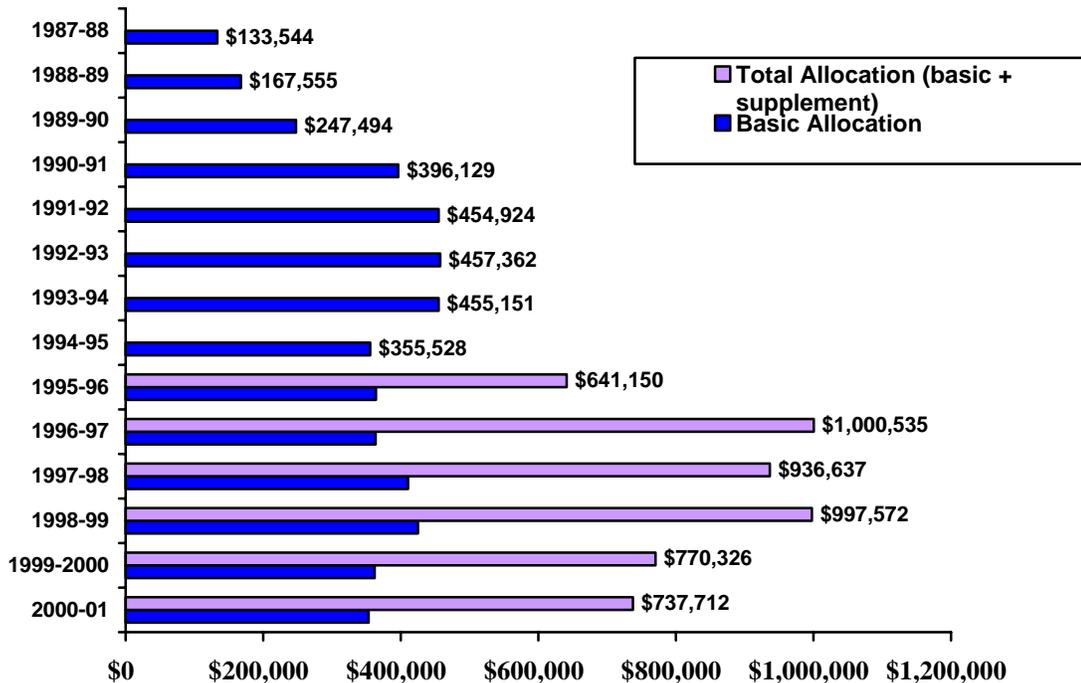
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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION: TITLE IV AT AISD

Austin Independent School District (AISD) has received federal funding through the Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) grant since the 1987-88 school year. The purpose of the SDFSC grant is to supplement state and local educational organizations' efforts towards education on and prevention of drug abuse and violence. Grant funds are funneled from the U.S. Department of Education, through state education Agencies (e.g., the Texas Education Agency), to school districts and other entities at the local level.

Figure 1: Title IV SDFSC Grant Monies Received by AISD, 1987-2001



* Total Allocation for each year includes only monies awarded during that funding cycle. Funds rolled forward from previous funding cycles are not included.

Source: AISD grant records.

As shown in Figure 1, during the 2000-01 school year, AISD received a total Title IV grant of \$737,712 that consisted of a basic formula allocation of \$353,278 and a supplemental allotment of \$384,434. In addition to funds allotted for the 2000-01 school year, AISD had available \$192,582 in funds that were granted late in the previous funding cycle and were rolled forward as a result, yielding a total 2000-01 Title IV budget of \$930,294. The supplemental portion of the award was received as a result of competitive funding provided by the Texas Education Agency to the top 10% of school districts in Texas who demonstrated the greatest need on their SDFSC grant application based on both continued need and demonstrated progress toward goals. AISD has received supplemental Title IV funding since the 1995-96 school year. The basic Title IV allotment has varied slightly from year to year since 1994-95, ranging from a 13% increase between 1996-97 and 1997-98 to a 15% reduction between 1998-99 and 1999-2000. However, supplemental funding has declined 40% since 1996-97. The result is a 26% overall reduction in AISD resources for drug and violence prevention since 1996-97 (Figure 1).

Concerns in the past over the significant portion of Title IV money that was rolled forward each year, and the possibility of losing any unused funds above 25% of the grant award, led to concerted efforts to spend all Title IV monies within the year in which it was allotted. As a result, in 2000-01 less than 1% of the funds remained at the end of the funding cycle to be rolled forward into the 2001-2002 year.

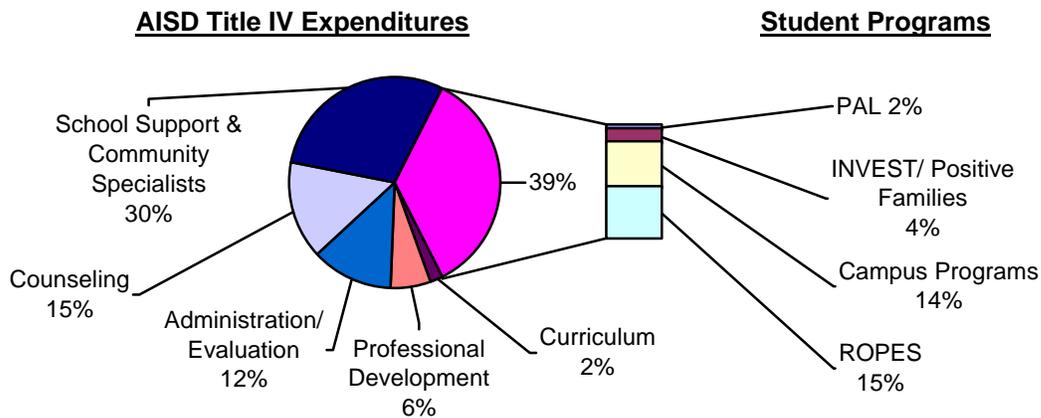
COMPONENTS OF THE AISD TITLE IV PROGRAM

AISD takes a multi-faceted approach to providing drug and violence prevention education through Title IV. In addition to programs aimed at student education on violence and substance use prevention, Title IV funding was utilized to provide districtwide support services in the form of professional development, specialized personnel, a variety of curriculum materials, and program evaluation. Over one-third (39%) of the 2000-01 Title IV budget was spent directly on student programs, and the remainder was expended for districtwide support services (Figure 2).

Three of the student programs, PAL, ROPES, and INVEST/Positive Families, are offered districtwide. PAL is a peer mentor program in which older students (PALs) mentor younger students (PALees) in their own school or in schools in their vertical

team. The ROPES program consists of a series of workshops designed around physical challenges that provide experiential learning opportunities for students. INVEST/Positive Families are school-based curriculum programs for middle and high school students and their parents, available to students who are referred to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) for first-time drug offenses or persistent misbehavior. In addition to districtwide programs, each individual campus uses Title IV funds to implement their own student programs based on campus-specific needs. Some campuses used their funds to supplement districtwide programs at their campus (e.g., many campuses spent a portion of their funds to further support the PAL program on their campus). Student programs are described in more detail in Part 2 of this report.

Figure 2: Total Title IV Expenditures by Program Component



Source: 2000-01 AISD Title IV Budget

Districtwide support services provide a foundation and structure from which the student programs draw personnel and material resources. Five partially funded school support and community specialists as well as two full time counselors who specialize in drug and violence prevention services and one partially funded counseling program specialist are available to assist schools with their specialized needs. In addition, curriculum materials and guidance regarding use of these materials are provided, as is professional development in the area of violence and drug prevention. Finally, a proportion of the funding is utilized for administration of the grant and evaluation of the

programs implemented through grant funds. The components of districtwide support services are described in more detail in Part 3 of this report.

In compliance with the Title IV federal grant mandate, AISD continued to host and facilitate the AISD Title IV Advisory Council, which provided a monthly forum for input and collaboration from district stakeholders and community agencies. Many community agencies (e.g., Lifeworks, Safe Place, Communities in Schools, and YWCA) partnered with the district by providing in-kind services at numerous AISD schools (Appendix A). In addition, several Advisory Council members represented other federal and local grant initiatives with similar goals, such as the Middle School Coordinators and Elementary School Counseling grants.

FRAMING THE PROBLEM

An essential part of addressing the extent of youth substance use and violence consists of having an accurate understanding of the problem. In order to do this, as well as to comply with the Title IV requirement of conducting annual needs assessment and evaluation, AISD utilizes three primary data sources regarding the current incidence and prevalence of student substance use and violence within the district. These data sources include the district's discipline incident reporting system, an annual student self-report survey, and an annual employee self-report survey.

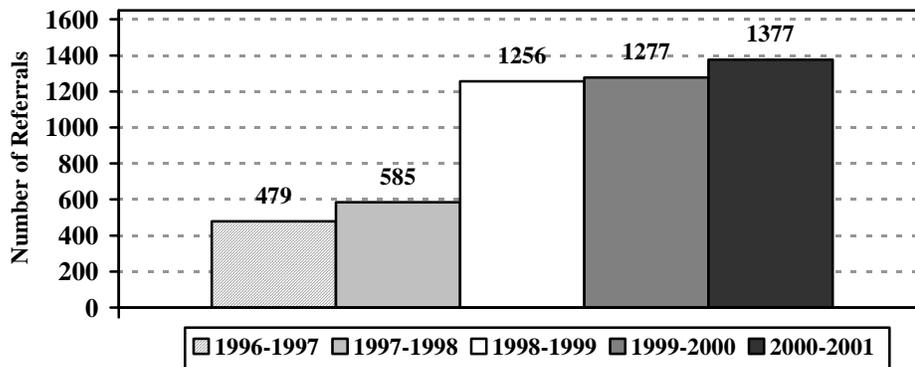
SUBSTANCE USE IN AISD

District Student Discipline Data Related to Substance Use

Improvements in the district's student discipline incident reporting system since 1997-98 have led to more accurate campus reporting, and therefore more meaningful districtwide data. The apparent increase in the number of referrals between 1997-98 and 1998-99 can most likely be attributed to improved reporting of incidents rather than to increased substance use by students. Following improvements in reporting, the numbers of substance referrals for the use or possession of any substance, including tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and all other illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, ecstasy, etc.) were

relatively stable between 1998-99 and 1999-2000, implying stable use by students. This is followed by an increase of 100 referrals in 2000-2001 (Figure 3). Taking into account the student population growth of 1% at AISD during that period, this represents a 6% change. While any increase in substance use is undesirable, the number of substance referrals *per capita* changed only by 0.001 (i.e., 1 more referral for every 1,000 students). In practical terms, on average, this is less than 1 more referral at each campus over the academic year.

Figure 3: AISD Student Discipline Referrals for Substance Use or Possession, 1997- 2001

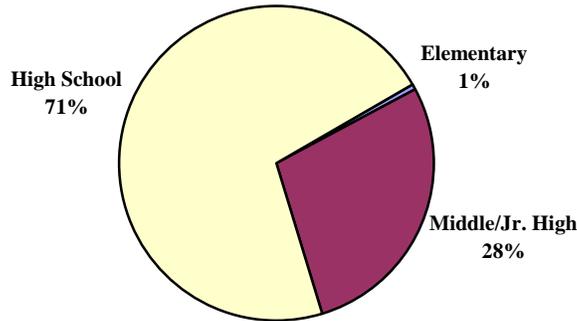


Source: 2000-01 AISD Student Discipline Records

High school students accounted for the majority (71%) of substance use and possession referrals (Figure 4), despite accounting for only about 25% of AISD's student population. In addition, the *AISD Student Substance Use and Safety Survey* (see "Student Survey" section below) revealed that high school students were also more likely than those in middle and junior high to self-report that they had brought a substance to school during the school year (35% vs. 26%, respectively). These two data sources support one another, yet there remains an implied overrepresentation of high school student substance referrals. Specifically, when student population is taken into account, high school students are more than twice as likely to receive a discipline referral for substances as middle and junior high school students, yet only 9% more high school students report bringing substances to school. While it is possible that high school students bring substances to school more often, and therefore receive more referrals, than middle and

junior high students, this hypothesis cannot be directly tested because the survey did not tap the frequency that substances were brought to school. However, if self-reported *use* of substances is related to the frequency with which they are brought to school, then it is possible to extrapolate that this hypothesis is true (see “Student Survey” section below).

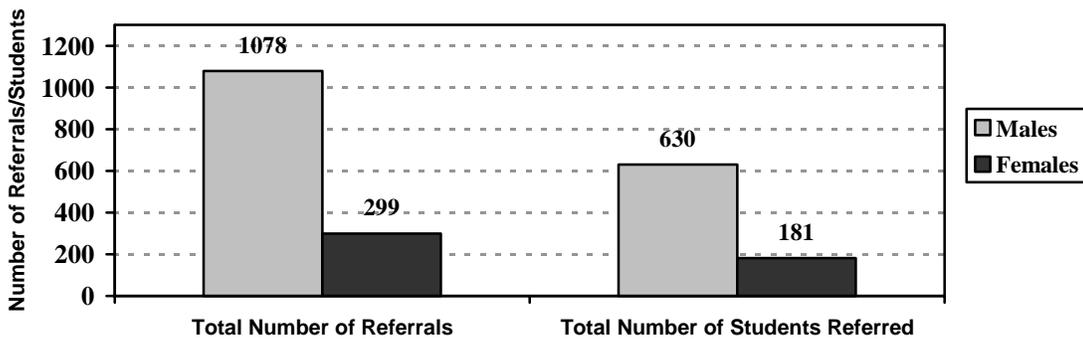
Figure 4: Percent of AISD Student Referrals for Substance Use or Possession by School Level, 2000-2001



Source: 2000-01 AISD Student Discipline Records

Similar to trends observed in previous years, in 2000-01 males were cited with the vast majority (78%, n = 1078) of student substance discipline referrals (Figure 5). However, in the *AISD Student Substance Use and Safety Survey*, males were not significantly more likely than females to report that they had brought a substance to school during the past year (32% and 28% respectively) or that they had used tobacco,

Figure 5: AISD Student Discipline Referrals by Gender, 2000-01



* Note – individual students may account for one or more referrals

Source: 2000-01 AISD Student Discipline Records

alcohol, or other drugs within the past month (21% and 18% respectively). On average, regardless of gender, students who were referred for substance use or possession were referred more than once (1.7 times). A total of 1,377 substance use or possession referrals were committed by 811 individual students (Figure 5). Further efforts to reduce repeat offenses are needed.

Student Survey Data Regarding Substance Use

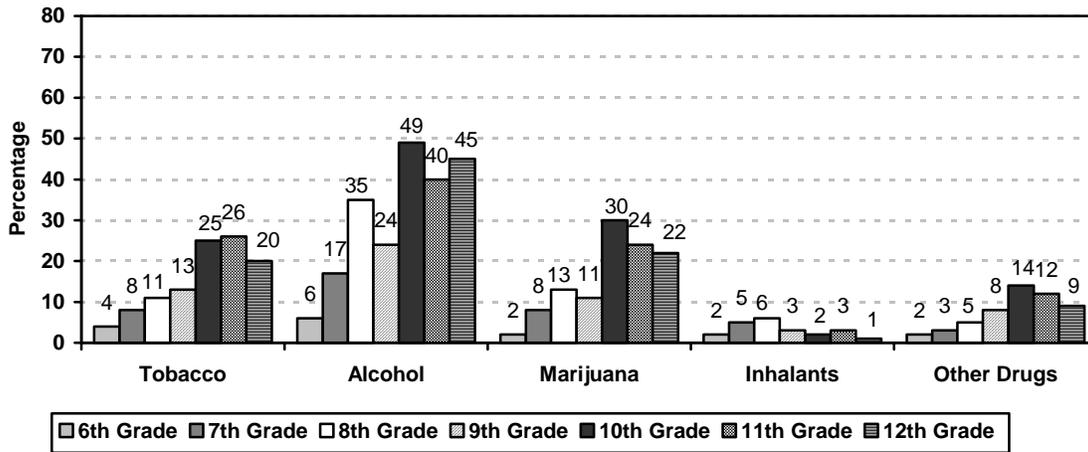
A self-report student survey of substance use and school safety is administered to a random representative sample of AISD students annually. On alternating years, the district either participates in the statewide Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) survey, or independently conducts a similar survey, as it did during the 2000-01 school year. The student survey is used to track student knowledge, attitudes, and self-reported behavior over time. A variety of survey questions tap student's perceptions about and experiences with substance use, feelings regarding school safety, incidence of bringing either substances or weapons to school, and participation in school-based prevention and education activities. The student survey is a valuable tool for longitudinal assessment of trends within AISD and for annual comparisons between AISD and state and national samples.

The *AISD Student Substance Use and Safety Survey* was administered in the spring of 2001. An attempt was made to attain a representative sample of students in grades 6-12 at each campus. However, of over 3,000 students sampled, a total of only 1,064 students responded to the survey (35%). Most grade levels at all AISD middle and junior high schools, and all grade levels at all but one high school, participated in the survey, with each school contributing between 10 and 88 respondents. The low response rate for this survey, attributable to both the change in procedure to require active parent consent and the timing of the survey being too near the end of the year and TAAS exams, did not provide a sample large enough to be representative at the individual school level. Districtwide results only are reported.

General Usage Trends

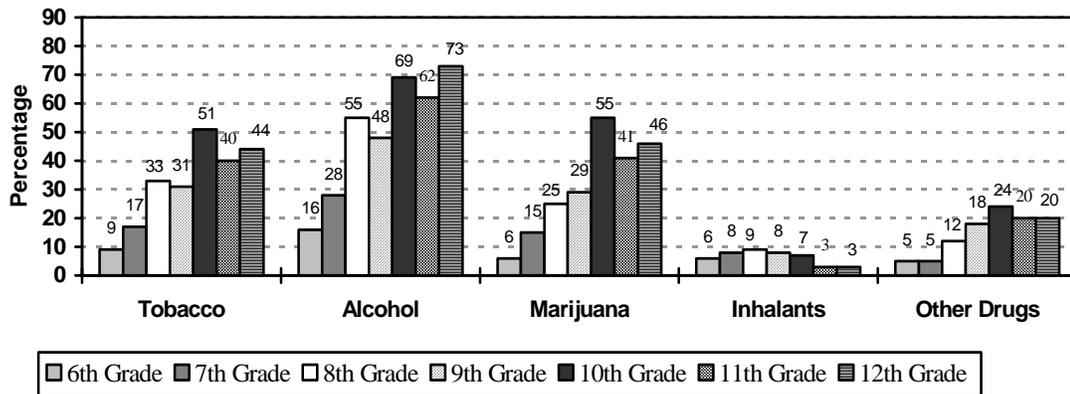
As illustrated in Figures 6 and 7 (see also Appendix B, Figures B1 and B2), alcohol is the most prevalently reported substance used by students, both within the past month (i.e., *Recent*) and at any time in the past (i.e., *Ever*). Reported use of tobacco and marijuana are almost equivalent, falling behind alcohol in prevalence for both *Recent* and *Ever* use. Incidence of student inhalant use and other drug use (including one or more of the following: cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine) is much less common, though still present.

Figure 6: Percentage of AISD Students Reporting Recent (past month) Substance Use, 2000-01



Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Figure 7: Percentage of AISD Students Reporting Ever Using Substances, 2000-01



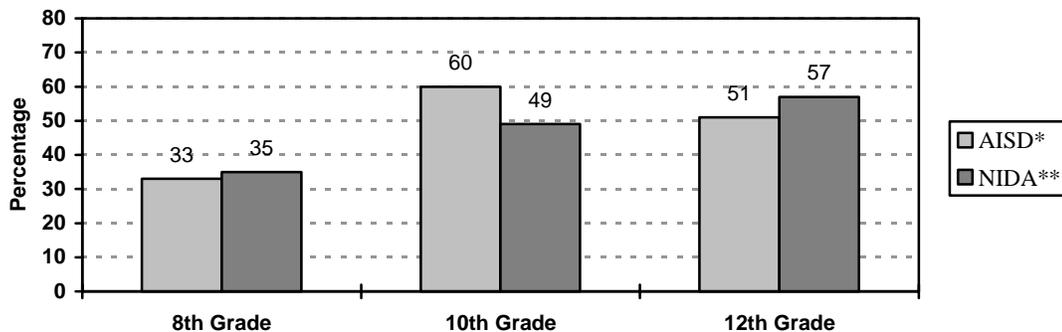
Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Reported substance use incrementally increases with grade level for most substances. For example, students in 7th grade are more likely to report tobacco use than students in 6th grade. One exception to this is in the reported use of inhalants, where usage generally peaks in 8th grade, then decreases through the high school grade levels. These usage trends replicate previous findings in AISD (see Appendix B, Figures B3-B6). Another exception in the 2000-01 data is with this year's sample of 10th graders, who exhibit elevated reported use of substances. Although the sample of 10th graders (n=94) is relatively small, and possibly not representative of all AISD 10th graders, it is suspected that this group may have a higher than expected prevalence of substance use. In the 1999-2000 survey, as 9th graders, this year's cohort of 10th grade students also reported higher levels of recent tobacco and marijuana use (Doolittle & Ryan, 2000, p. 15). These results may suggest the need for a concentrated intervention with these students as 11th graders in the upcoming year.

AISD vs. National Samples

To compare the extent of reported substance use in AISD during the 2000-2001 school year to that at national levels, results from the 2000 National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) survey are used (Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 2001). The NIDA survey was chosen for comparison because similar questions are asked and representative samples of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade populations are surveyed.

Figure 8. Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Any Illicit Drug
AISD 2000-01 vs. NIDA 2000



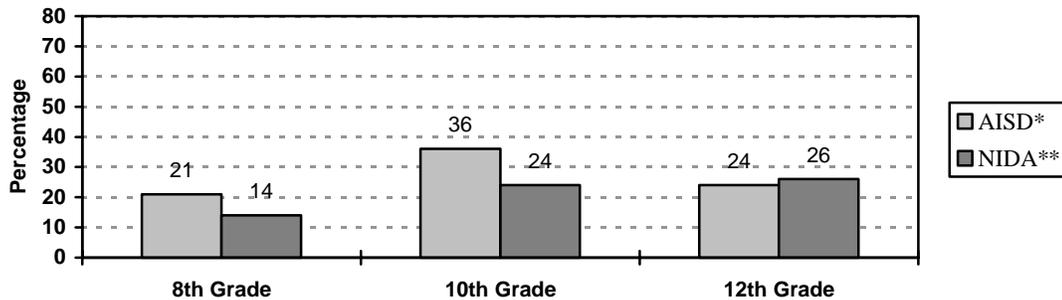
Any Illicit Drug includes reported use of one or more of the following: marijuana; inhalants; cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, Mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine.

* Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

** Source: Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 2001

The 2000-01 cohort of AISD 10th graders were more likely to be using substances than were NIDA's national sample of 10th graders, both recently and at any time in the past (Figures 8 and 9). This information, in combination with the cohort data discussed above, emphasizes the need for a focused effort with this group of students as 11th graders. In contrast, AISD 12th graders were slightly lower than the national sample on both recent and past substance use. Although approximately equivalent in past use, AISD 8th graders appear to be more likely to regularly use substances (based on recent use) than 8th graders in the US. Thus, prevention education programs are still needed at both the middle and high school levels.

Figure 9. Percentage of Students Reporting Recent Illicit Drug Use
AISD 2000-01 vs. NIDA 2000



Recent Illicit Drug Use includes reported use of one or more of the following within the past 30 days: marijuana; inhalants; cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, Mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine.

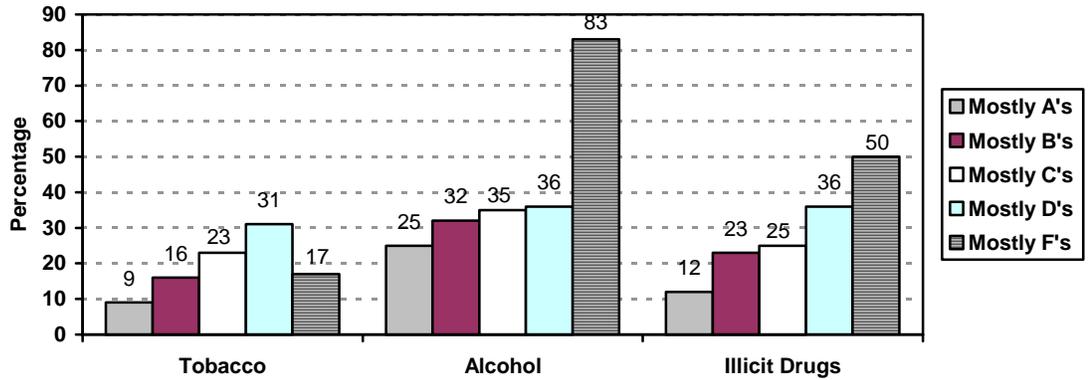
* Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

** Source: Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 2001

Substance Use, Academic Performance, and Parent Involvement

Based on student survey results, there is an inverse relationship between self-reported grades and substance use. Students who claim to make better grades in school, on average, also report less tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use (Figure 10 and Appendix B, Figure B7). Unfortunately, it cannot be determined from these data if there is a causal relationship between these two variables, or if there is yet another variable contributing to both.

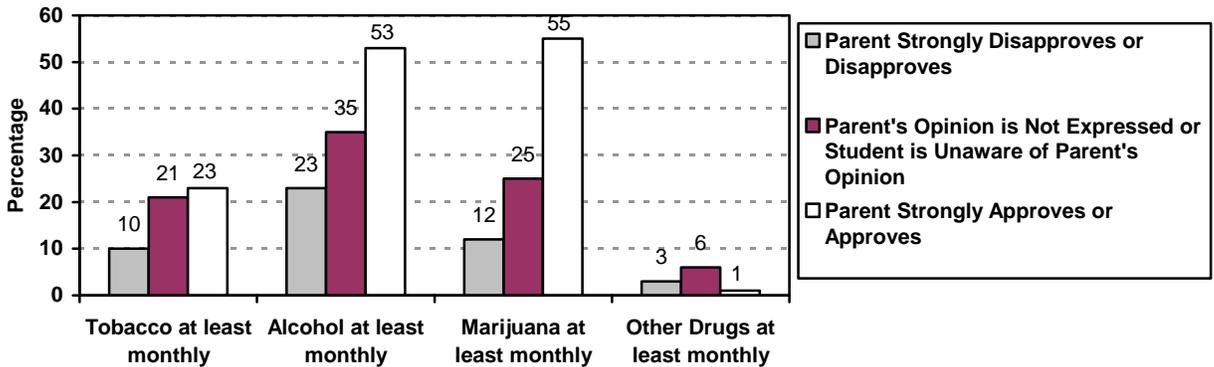
Figure 10: Percentage of AISD Students Reporting Recent Substance Use by Typical Grades Received, 2000-01



* *Illicit Drugs* include reported use of one or more of the following: marijuana; inhalants; cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, Mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine. *Recent Use* is within the past 30 days.

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Figure 11: Percent of AISD Students Reporting Regular* Use of Substances by Student Perceptions of Their Parents' Feelings about Teen Substance Use, 2000-01



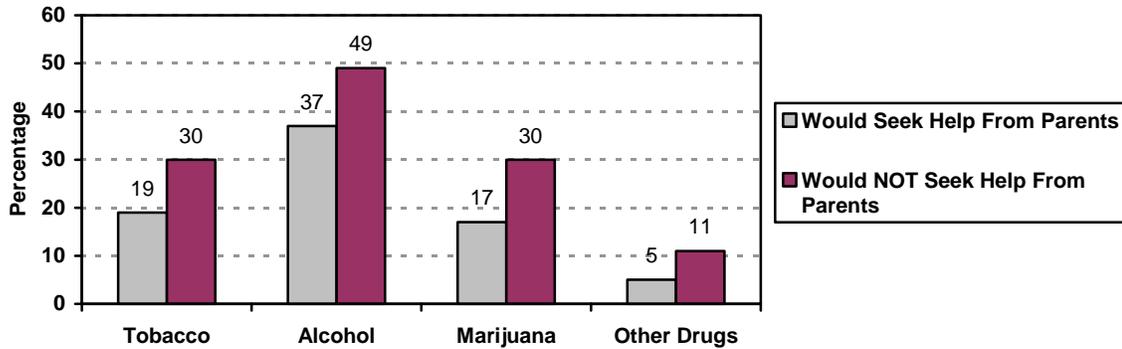
* Students who reported they use the substance "daily," "weekly," or "monthly."

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Survey data indicate a relationship between student self-reported substance use and student perceptions of parent attitudes about substance use. Specifically, students were less likely to report tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use, and use them less frequently, if they believed that their parents disapproved of kids their age using these substances (Figure 11). Students who believed that their parents approved of kids their age using substances, or whose parents had not conveyed a strong message regarding substance use, were much more likely to report using tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. In

addition, students who said they would seek help from a parent if they had a drug or alcohol problem were less likely to use substances than their peers who would not seek help from a parent (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Percent of AISD Students Reporting Substance Use* by Whether or Not They Would Seek Help from Their Parents for a Drug or Alcohol Problem, 2000-01



* Students reported they use the substance: “less than once a year,” “about once a year,” “monthly,” “weekly,” or “daily.”

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Student Perceptions of Substance Use

For the most part, students perceived most substances to be at least “somewhat dangerous” (Table 1). Those who perceived substances as more dangerous were less likely to report that they used them, and those using substances perceived them to be less dangerous. However, a significant proportion of students who perceived use of substances to be very or somewhat dangerous still reported that they normally used those substances at least once a month. Thus, students are getting the message that substances are dangerous, but many still do not avoid them. This phenomenon is most prominent concerning alcohol. Over 22% of the total number of students who believed alcohol is either “very dangerous” (12%) or “somewhat dangerous” (39%) continue to report that they use it at least monthly, despite reported beliefs. This may reflect adolescent feelings of immortality (Elkind, 1967) or invulnerability (Balk, 1995), indicating the need for prevention programs that stress that alcohol use is not dangerous only for “other” people.

Table 1: AISD Students' Perceptions of the Danger of Substance Use and Regular Substance Use by Perception, 2000-01

Substance	Middle/Jr. High School Student Perceptions (n=538)*	High School Student Perceptions (n=455)*	Students reporting at least Monthly Use (sum of monthly, weekly and daily use reporters)
Tobacco			
Very or Somewhat Dangerous (n=852)	87%	85%	9.6%
Not Very or Not At All Dangerous (n=106)	9%	13%	32.1%
Alcohol			
Very or Somewhat Dangerous (n=834)	85%	87%	22.5%
Not Very or Not At All Dangerous (n=111)	11%	11%	51.4%
Marijuana			
Very or Somewhat Dangerous (n=793)	88%	69%	6.8%
Not Very or Not At All Dangerous (n=170)	9%	27%	52.9%
Inhalants			
Very or Somewhat Dangerous (n=933)	92%	93%	1.7%
Not Very or Not At All Dangerous (n=37)	4%	3%	21.6%

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

*Note – percents for each substance within each school level do not sum to 100 because “I don’t know” responses are not shown here.

Sources of Information & Help

Almost all students surveyed (96%) reported receiving information from at least one school source (Table 2). The majority of high school students (61%) said that they had received information regarding drugs, alcohol or violence from their health teacher.

Table 2: AISD Student's Self Reported School Sources for Information on Drugs, Alcohol, and Violence, 2000-01

During this school year, from which of the following school sources have you received any information on drugs, alcohol, or violence?	Middle/Junior High School Students* (n=565)	High School Students (n=477)
Health Teacher	39%	61%
Another Teacher (during class)	53%	35%
School Event (assembly or guest speaker)	30%	37%
PAL program/teacher	11%	23%
Another Teacher (outside of class)	14%	12%
Guidance Counselor	14%	6%
ROPES	7%	7%
Student Support Group Meetings at School	5%	6%
Positive Families or INVEST class	2%	2%
Other School Source	21%	20%
Students who reported receiving information from at least one of the above school sources	96%	96%

* Middle/Junior High School = 6th – 8th Grade, and High School = 9th – 12th Grade

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

Middle school students reported that teachers other than their health teacher (53%) were their most common school source of information on these topics.

While 39% of both middle/junior high and high school students reported that they would go to their parents for help with a drug or alcohol problem, students most frequently said that they would go to a friend (Table 3). These reports indicate that efforts need to be made to educate both parents and students about appropriate and effective ways to help a child or peer with a drug or alcohol problem. Unfortunately, 12% of students reported that they would not seek any help from anyone if faced with a drug or alcohol problem. To reach these students, parents need to be educated about how to identify those who may not confide.

Table 3: AISD Student's Self-Reported Source for Help When Faced With a Drug or Alcohol Problem, 2000-01

If you had a drug or alcohol problem and needed help, who would you go to?	Middle/Junior High School Students (n=565)	High School Students (n=477)
A friend	42%	59%
Parents	39%	39%
A counselor at school	33%	16%
Another adult outside of school (e.g., a relative, clergyman, or family friend)	23%	27%
A medical doctor	17%	15%
Another adult at school (e.g., teacher or nurse)	15%	15%
A counselor outside of school	11%	9%
I wouldn't go to anyone. I'd keep it to myself.	12%	12%

Middle School = 6th – 8th Grade, and High School = 9th – 12th Grade

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

AISD Employee Coordinated Survey Data Regarding Student Substance Use

In the spring of 2001, a stratified random sample of 837 AISD employees at elementary, middle/jr. high, and high school campuses received a survey, distributed by the Office of Program Evaluation. The purpose of this survey was to obtain staff opinions and perceptions about student substance use, student and staff safety, and AISD prevention education efforts. Over 80% of the employees sampled returned surveys, though not all participants responded to all questions. The final group of participants (n=670) was composed of 54% teachers, 24% classified personnel (e.g., hall monitors

and teaching assistants), 16% campus professionals (e.g., counselors), and 6% campus administrators (e.g., principals and assistant principals).

Teachers had a wide range of opinions regarding the prevalence of student substance use at their school. The majority of teachers overestimated the prevalence of both student tobacco and marijuana use when compared to students' self-reports. However, some teachers and a significant proportion of campus administrators underestimated students' self-reported experiences with alcohol (see Appendix B, Table B1). This discrepancy between student self-reports and staff perceptions regarding substance use could be related to the students' behavior at school. Specifically, tobacco is the substance that students most commonly report bringing to school (Table 4), and as such it is the substance that school staff most likely witness students being involved with. This indicates a need to raise the awareness levels of secondary teachers and administrators regarding the prevalence of student alcohol use. While survey results indicate that 45% of secondary teachers and 100% of secondary administrators attended at least one seminar, workshop, or conference within the past two years that focused on the prevention of student alcohol and drug use or violence prevention, they still greatly overestimate tobacco use and underestimate alcohol use. This may mean that information about the prevalence of student substance use is not being effectively communicated to staff during these professional development opportunities. Providing teachers and administrators with accurate trends in student substance use could help them to better plan appropriate prevention activities.

Table 4: AISD Student Self-Reports of Substances Brought to School, 2000-01

During this school year, which of the following have you brought to school?	Middle School and Jr. High Students (n=565)	High School Students (n=477)
Tobacco	16%	25%
Alcohol	10%	11%
Illegal Drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, etc.)	7%	14%

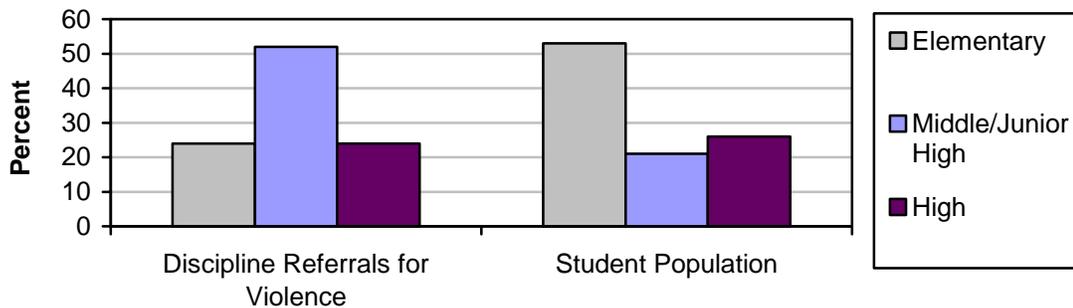
Middle School and Jr. High = 6th – 8th Grade, and High School = 9th – 12th Grade

Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

VIOLENCE IN AISD

The overall number of violence referrals increased 16% at AISD between 1999-2000 (n=6109) and 2000-01 (n=7098). Middle and junior high school students were responsible for 52% of the discipline referrals for violence despite accounting for less than 22% of the AISD student population (Figure 13). Concern regarding violence in the middle and junior high schools is reflected in the belief of 61% of teachers surveyed at these schools that student safety (i.e., fighting, harassment, and threats) is the most serious problem on their campus. Surveyed students at this level also indicated that safety is the most serious problem on their campus (36%).

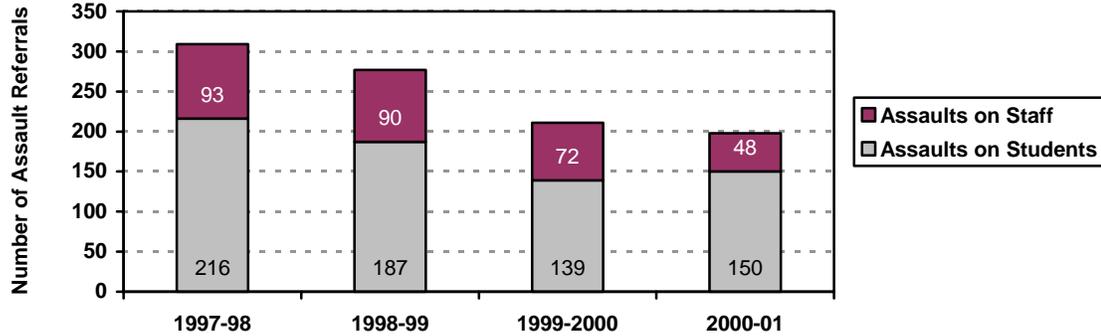
Figure 13: Percentage of AISD Student Discipline Violence Referrals and Student Population by School Level, 2000-01



Source: 2000-01 AISD Student Discipline Records and 2000-01 AISD PEIMS enrollment numbers

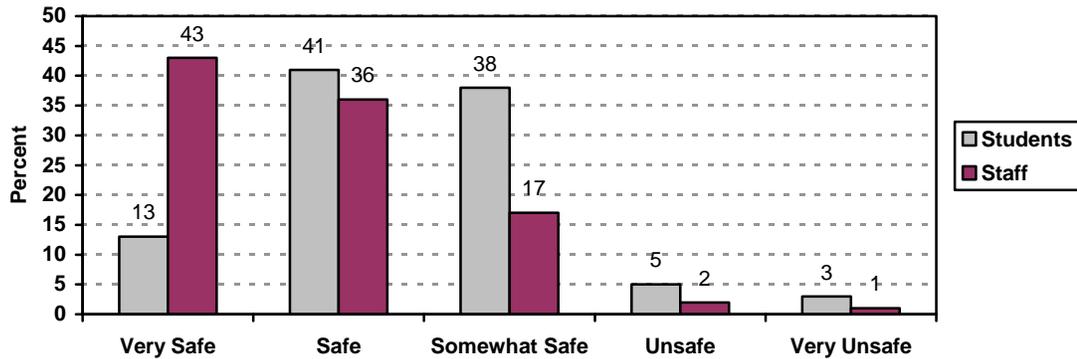
A 6% overall reduction of assaults on campuses between 1999-2000 and 2000-01 was based on significantly fewer (33%) assaults on staff despite slightly more (7%) assaults on students (Figure 14). However, survey data showed that 46% of students reported having been threatened or physically harmed by another student at least once in the past school year and 8% experienced this on a regular basis (i.e., at least once a month). In addition, 19% of staff surveyed reported being threatened or harmed at least once in the past school year. Yet, contradictory to these results, the majority of both students and staff reported feeling safe or very safe when they were at school (54% of students, 79% of staff), and only a few reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Number of Assault Discipline Referrals in AISD, 1997-98 to 2000-01



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Figure 15: Percent of AISD Student and Staff Perceptions of Safety at School, 2000-01



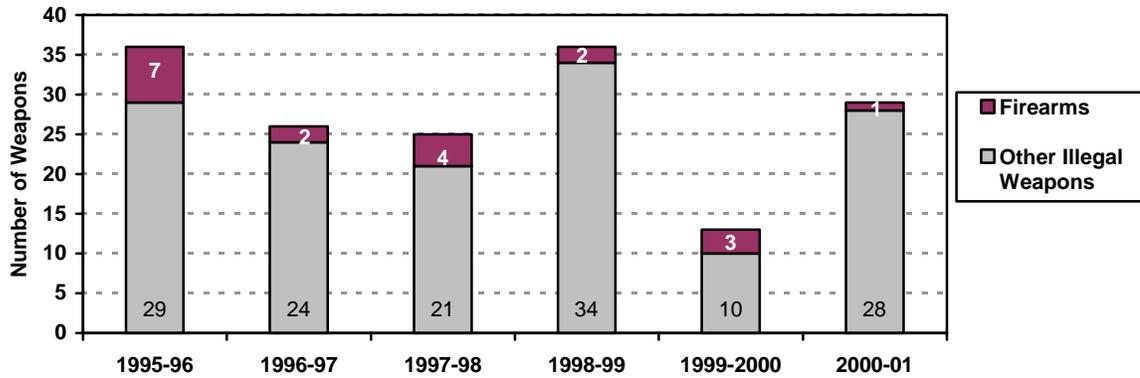
Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey and 2001 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey

Weapons

There was a significant increase in the number of discipline referrals for possession of illegal weapons between 1999-2000 and 2000-01 (Figure 16). While the number of referrals for firearms remained minimal (only one in 2000-01), the number of referrals involving other illegal weapons (e.g., nun-chucks, brass knuckles, mace or pepper spray, etc.) nearly tripled (n=28). Based on survey results, knives were the weapons most commonly reported being brought to school by high school students (11%), while middle and junior high students were most likely to report bringing other weapons (e.g., nun-chucks, brass knuckles, mace, pepper spray, etc.) to school (8%) (Table 5). While it is possible that the apparent increase in discipline referrals for

weapons is related to more efficient and accurate reporting of offenses, increased prevention efforts and coordination between teachers, students, campus administrators and resources officers is needed to eliminate weapons from school property.

Figure 16: Number of AISD Discipline Referrals for Weapons Possession
1995-96 to 2000-01



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Table 5: Number of AISD Student Self-Reports of Weapons Brought to School, 2000-01

During <u>this</u> school year, which of the following have you brought to school?	Middle School and Jr. High Students (n=565)	High School Students (n=477)
Gun	3%	2%
Knife	7%	11%
Other Weapon (e.g., nun-chucks, brass knuckles, mace or pepper spray, etc.)	8%	6%

Middle School and Jr. High = 6th – 8th Grade, and High School = 9th – 12th Grade

*Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

PART 2: AISD TITLE IV STUDENT PROGRAMS

PAL: PEER ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The PAL program is a peer-helping program offering course credit to selected secondary students who receive six weeks of classroom training on various topics before acting as peer mentors (PALs) to younger students (PALees) at their own schools or at lower level schools in their vertical team (e.g. a high school PAL may be mentoring a middle school PALee). During 2000-2001, 356 PALs from 10 high schools and 7 middle schools worked with 967 PALees from 3 high schools, 10 middle and junior high schools, and 24 elementary schools. Title IV funding provides partial (25%) funding for a district PAL coordinator, which is supplemented through collaboration with PanAmerica, a local non-profit agency, via a grant provided by the Dell Foundation. The goal of the PAL program is to help students have a more positive and productive school experience through the accomplishment of the following objectives:

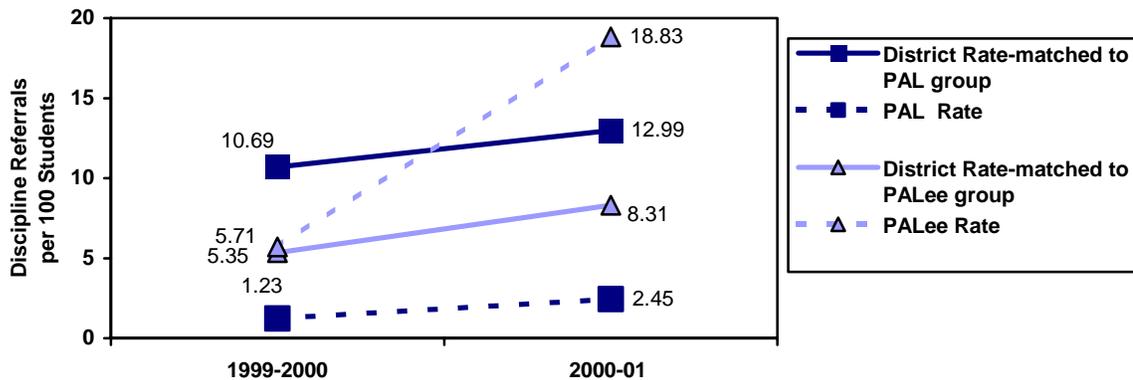
- ⌘ provide both individual and group-level peer support,
- ⌘ help prevent students from dropping out of school,
- ⌘ promote improved personal responsibility and decision making,
- ⌘ promote improved behavior and school attendance,
- ⌘ promote positive interpersonal behaviors,
- ⌘ encourage improvement in academic performance via tutoring and academic mentoring,
- ⌘ prevent substance abuse, and
- ⌘ encourage involvement in community service projects both within the school and out in the community.

DISCIPLINE DATA

Longitudinal analysis of student discipline records revealed that 2000-01 PALs exhibited consistently lower discipline rates than the matched district sample rates during both 1999-2000 and 2000-01. In contrast, the 2000-01 PALees had a discipline rate similar to the district matched group in 1999-2000 but far exceeded the district rate in the

following year (Figure 17). This is not necessarily a poor reflection on the program and could primarily represent selection effects. That is, PALs are chosen to participate in the program on the basis of their ability to be effective mentors, and it appears that appropriate students are being selected; PALs have significantly lower discipline rates than average students in their same grade levels. On the other hand, PALees are often selected because they have been identified as being in need of some extra guidance.

Figure 17: AISD PAL, PALee and Matched District Discipline Rates, 2000-2001



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Traditionally, outcomes for the PALs have been emphasized in the PAL program. Despite the PALees being the target of the mentorship, little has been done to examine the effectiveness of the program for the PALees and this is an area that merits further investigation. Once students are identified as needing additional support and enrolled as a PALee, perhaps too much responsibility for their progress has been left up to the PAL mentors, who are only students themselves. The PALee students may need more intense or diverse interventions than brief weekly meetings with a peer can provide. Longitudinal follow-up is necessary to explore this area.

PAL SURVEY DATA

All PALs and PALees were surveyed in both the fall and spring semesters, and all PAL teachers and PALee facilitators were surveyed in the spring (Appendix C). Overall, both PALs and PALees reported enjoying participating in the program and made positive comments about the students with whom they were paired. There were few changes in

the perceptions and self reported behaviors of the PALs or PALees between the fall and spring semesters, and the vast majority reported that they “*most of the time*” or “*all of the time*”: felt good about themselves, experienced positive relationships with others, made good decisions, and communicated with others effectively. However, there was a decrease in spring semester in the percent of PALs who reported that they successfully avoided alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (78% vs. 64%). This mirrors districtwide trends of more substance use occurring in the spring semester.

Both PAL teachers and PALee facilitators were surveyed regarding their experiences with the program and their perceptions of the program’s impact on the students. Overall, the PAL program was viewed as having a positive effect on both PALs and PALees, and most of the teachers and facilitators found it to be a good experience for themselves as well.

A couple areas in need of improvement were highlighted by both teacher and student surveys. One frustration noted concerned the challenge of transporting PAL students to PALee schools. Aside from being inconvenient, reliance on PAL students and teachers who are willing to provide shuttle service may put AISD in a precarious liability position. In addition, those involved in the PAL program felt that the scheduling did not allow PALs and PALees enough interaction time.

ROPES: REALITY ORIENTED PHYSICAL EXPERIENTIAL SESSION

The ROPES program is a five-phase series of workshops designed around physical challenges that provide experiential learning for AISD students and staff (Table 6). Each phase is developmentally and instructionally suitable for the students being served and stresses the message that drug use is harmful and wrong. The AISD Frost ROPES Course provides an experiential educational opportunity for students and staff to build skills in leadership, trust, communication, collective problem solving, decision-making and resistance to peer pressure. Risk and resiliency research has shown that developing these skills in students can lead to the prevention of substance use and violence (CSAP, 1999). To instill these protective factors in students, the ROPES program specialists focus on the following objectives:

- ⚡ Increase students' levels of self confidence,
- ⚡ Improve students' abilities to make decisions, work in groups, solve problems, make better choices, share ideas, listen to others, and
- ⚡ Help students see themselves as leaders through leadership skill development.

Table 6: The ROPES Five Phase Workshops

ROPES Phase	Participants	Purpose	Location
I	Teachers	Teacher Facilitator training	Campus
II	Students	Introduction to program	Campus
III	Students	Develop skills: Leadership, Trust, Communication, Group Problem-Solving, Negative Peer Pressure Resistance	ROPES Course
IV	Students	Link ROPES experiences with life experiences	Campus
V	Students	Practice new skills	ROPES Course

Note: Phase IV is optional based on teacher discretion, as it is led by teachers. In addition, Phase V is not offered to elementary students in order to serve more students from those schools.

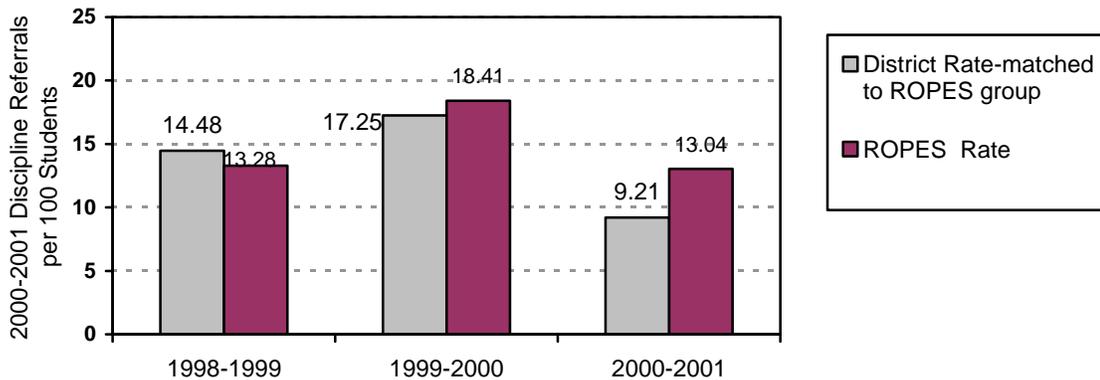
The ROPES program served over 4,100 students in the district and nearly 580 staff and other adults during the 2000-2001 school year. SDFSC funds were used for the following: salaries of a program manager and two staff program specialists, pay for substitutes to allow participation by teachers, transportation costs, and program support (e.g., supplies). Since the program's inception in the district in 1991, over 23,100 students and 4,570 staff and other adults have been served. For more information about the ROPES philosophy and background, see the 1999-2000 Title IV SDFSC Evaluation Report (Doolittle & Ryan, 2000).

DISCIPLINE DATA

Although many of the skills learned through ROPES can help prepare students to avoid violence and the use of drugs and alcohol, it is possible that this message was not explicit enough in the program. Longitudinal analysis of district discipline data reveals that there is little difference between the substance use and violence referrals of those who do and do not participate in the ROPES program (Figure 18). Specifically, for

students who participated in the ROPES program during the 1998-1999 or 1999-2000 school years, differences between participants and non-participants on 2000-2001 discipline data were insignificant. In addition, discipline rates are slightly higher for 2000-2001 ROPES participants than non-participants on 2000-2001 discipline referrals. It is possible that this trend is, in part, due to the nature of the program. Many students are chosen to participate in ROPES as a result of being in groups at risk of discipline problems (e.g., transitioning 9th graders, students at the ALC, etc.). There is a difference in referral rates between participants and non-participants during the current year that could be a result of students receiving referrals during the year, *before* participating in ROPES. Following the referral rate of this group of 2000-2001 participants in comparison to district averages next year will address this possibility.

Figure 18: AISD 2000-2001 Discipline Rates for 1998-1999 thru 2000-2001 ROPES Participants and Matched District Group



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Recent cuts in funding to ROPES that have changed the way the program is implemented, may also have contributed to its declined effectiveness. In 1998-1999, ROPES facilitators were able to go out to the schools to conduct the Phase IV part of the program that focuses on how to apply ROPES lessons to real world experiences. Increasingly in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, reductions in ROPES personnel necessitated that classroom teachers conduct the Phase IV portion of the program on their own. Without a ROPES facilitator returning to the classroom, few students who returned surveys reported having completed the Phase IV of the program. Phase IV is the part of the program that most directly emphasizes the drug and violence prevention message by

linking the activities the students completed at the course to their every-day lives. One way to help students make the connection between ROPES and avoiding drugs and alcohol is to make sure that all students who participate in ROPES are exposed to Phase IV of the program. These findings, in combination with research that demonstrates the greater effectiveness of sustained programs than of one-time assemblies or presentations (Whitaker, 2001), indicate it is important to find a way to consistently implement the Phase IV portion of the ROPES program in the future, which might require serving fewer students.

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Twenty-four percent of 2000-2001 student participants completed a survey about their ROPES experience (n=994). Overall, the survey results indicate that the objective of ROPES (i.e., to provide students with an experience that enhances the aforementioned protective factors) is being met. Specifically, a majority of students felt that ROPES helped them to use communication skills (82%), to consider several choices when faced with a problem (76%), to understand the consequences of their actions (67%), to get along better with classmates (62%), and to be more willing to ask others for help (61%). This suggests that well over half of the students felt that the ROPES program helped them with skills that have been linked to drug and violence prevention. In addition, the majority of students felt that ROPES helped them to avoid illegal use of drugs and alcohol (76%), and to think through situations involving drugs and alcohol (62%). When asked what else they had learned, nearly 50% of those who responded said they learned the importance of teamwork (i.e., cooperation, sharing, how to work in a group, and helping others). Other students stated they learned the importance of trust and the importance of listening to others (i.e., their ideas, instructions).

TEACHER AND ADULT SURVEY RESULTS

Sixty-three teachers (of approximately 85 groups) returned completed surveys to Program Evaluation. All but one of the teachers who responded to the survey believed that ROPES was a good use of their own time and of district resources. Overall, teachers

believed that the ROPES program was productive and had a positive effect on their students (Appendix C).

Twenty-four adults, primarily parents (75%), returned completed surveys to Program Evaluation. Overall, adults agreed that students gained knowledge of their leadership potential (96%), but were mixed on whether or not students learned the skills to help them resist drug and alcohol use (46% agree, 44% neutral, and 8% disagree). Although many of the adults commented that they found it difficult to remain silent and allow students to work through the course challenges on their own, they also mentioned they learned that students are capable leaders and have innovative problem-solving skills. Several adult respondents said that they enjoyed being in a different role and seeing the students in a new setting.

THE CHALLENGE OF COORDINATING RESOURCES TO MEET DEMAND

Over the past several years, ROPES has consistently received feedback from students, staff, and other adult participants that indicate it is a highly worthwhile program. In addition, past evaluation showed ROPES to be effective in maintaining fewer violence and substance referrals for the students who participate in the program relative to overall district referral rates. While findings regarding referral rates were not replicated in the current year, changes in the method of comparison of ROPES participants to district averages and actual changes in program implementation could account for this discrepancy. However, because recommendations based on past evaluations to expand and enhance the district's ROPES program have not been carried out, there continues to be a much greater demand for ROPES at AISD than can be met by the existing course facility and three full-time staff members alone. Over 4,100 students participated in ROPES last year, yet there were 23 other groups on the waiting list (projecting >2000 participants) who were unable to be served by the limited resources. Some of these groups went outside the district, paying vendors \$47,378 (\$14,178 in Title IV funds and \$33,405 from other funding sources) for similar experiential learning opportunities, but most of the groups on the waiting list were unable to participate at all in ROPES due to the prohibitive fees of external vendors.

During the 2000-01 school year, a new ROPES course was built at Bedichek Middle School using a combination of Bedichek's campus Title IV funds, community

donations, and non-Title IV grant monies. It was the hope of those involved in this project that this facility could help to meet overwhelming demand for ROPES within the school district. It was expected that the existing ROPES facilitators would assist in training teachers to facilitate the new course.

Despite recommendations of the grant manager, previous evaluations, high demand for ROPES within the district, and efforts from some departments to expand the AISD ROPES program, there were cuts made in Title IV funds that supported staff salaries and supplies to the program for the 2001-02 school year. These cuts negatively impacted this program in the following ways:

- ∄# Reduced the number of students that can participate in the activities on a daily basis;
- ∄# Rendered the high elements of the ROPES course less accessible because safety standards require that three *trained* adults be present in order to perform those activities; and
- ∄# Reduced training opportunities for teachers at the new Bedichek course because current facilitators are less available, which impacted the district's ability to efficiently utilize this new resource.

Better coordination between those overseeing separate aspects of the district's ROPES program is needed to ensure the most efficient use of funds possible. In addition, allowances should be made to implement the program as intended, without shortcuts that may be ultimately undermining its effectiveness. This may mean reducing the quantity of students served in order to maintain a high quality program.

INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES

When middle and high school students have been removed from their home campuses due to discipline offenses and placed at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), they may be assigned to specialized alternative education programs in addition to classroom and behavioral instruction. These specialized programs are aimed at increasing student protective factors in an effort to prevent future campus discipline

referrals. INVEST and Positive Families are two such programs, which focus on students who have been removed for drug or persistent misbehavior discipline offenses. A keystone of these programs is to require the participation of parents. In the school year 2000-2001, a total of 244 students were served by INVEST and Positive Families. By increasing communication, family support, problem-solving skills, anger management skills, and conflict resolution methods, students are better able to use healthy approaches to overcoming adversity, rather than turning to drugs or violence again in the future. Due to the similarity of these programs, they will be described together in this section.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Positive Families is a school-based curriculum program for middle and high school students, developed by AISD staff and first implemented in the district during the 1998-99 school year. This program is offered to students as an alternative to long-term removal for persistent misbehavior at the discretion of the home campus principal. INVEST (Involve Non-violent Values using Education, Self-control techniques, and Trust) is similar to Positive Families with the addition of an emphasis on drug prevention. INVEST was first implemented in the spring of 2000 and is an adaptation of the previously used SUPER I curriculum. AISD policy requires that all students who are removed to the ALC for a first time drug use or possession referral must be offered the opportunity to participate in this program.

The primary incentive for participation in Positive Families and INVEST is an abbreviated term of two weeks removal to the ALC, rather than the average removal of six weeks. Once a student and his or her parents (or other significant adult) successfully complete the voluntary four-session program, arrangements may be made for the student to return to the home school. A more prompt return to the home school prevents erosion of the home-school bond, and it prevents students from falling behind on course credits earned.

Title IV funds supporting INVEST and Positive Families primarily contribute to facilitator compensation for sessions occurring in the evening hours, program materials, and general program support (e.g., supplies, reproduction, snacks for parents and students).

The programmatic goals for Positive Families and INVEST include:

- ⊘ Improvement in student communication skills with other individuals, especially family members,
- ⊘ Improvement in anger management strategies,
- ⊘ Acquisition of positive conflict resolution methods,
- ⊘ Development of effective problem-solving skills,
- ⊘ Promotion of family involvement in support services, and
- ⊘ Elimination of short- and long-term substance use among targeted students (INVEST only).

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES SERVED

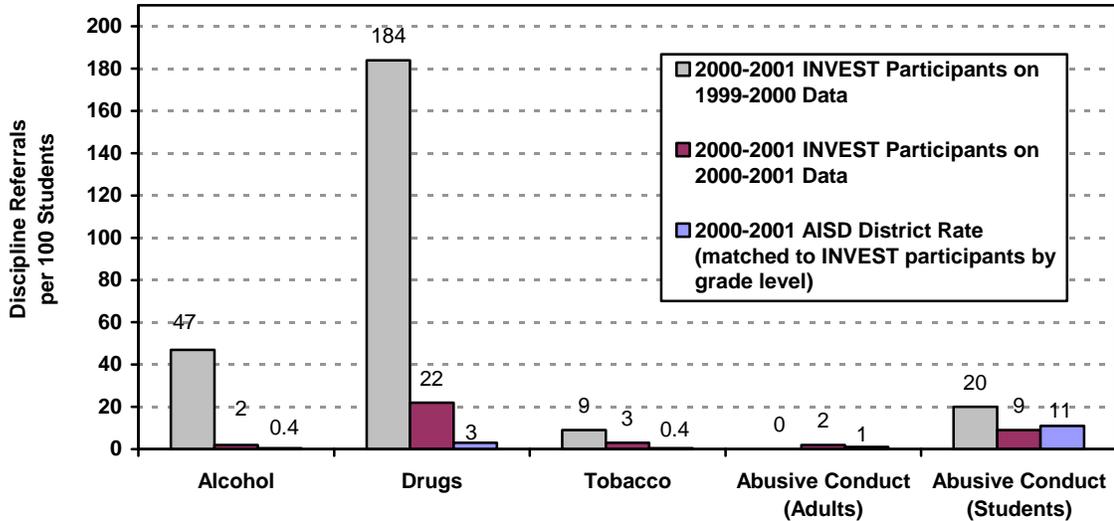
During 2000-2001, 361 students opted to participate in the INVEST program and 234 (65%) of these students completed the program. Of those who did not complete all four classes, 74 never attended any of the sessions, 14 attended only once, 15 attended twice, and 15 more attended three times. There were 24 students who agreed to participate in the Positive Families program. Of these, 10 (42%) completed the program, 11 never attended, 1 attended only once, and 2 attended three times. While it is unclear why 22% of those who signed on for these programs never attended, feedback from some of the facilitators indicated that those who attended at least once without completing often had scheduling or transportation difficulties.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA

Using districtwide student discipline records, analyses indicated that INVEST and Positive Families are highly effective in decreasing subsequent drug and violence referrals among participants. Specifically, students who participated in the INVEST and Positive Families program during 1999-2000 had no recidivism to the ALC during the 2000-2001 school year. Further, while students who completed INVEST in 2000-2001 maintained somewhat higher than average district rates of substance-related discipline referrals for grade-level matched students, their discipline rates were dramatically lower than they had had themselves during the previous year (Figure 19). In addition to having fewer drug, alcohol and tobacco referrals than they did during 1999-2000, INVEST participants also reduced their rate of abusive conduct toward students from nearly twice

the district rate in 1999-2000 to a rate lower than the district rate in 2000-2001 for grade-level matched students (from 20 to 9 per 100 students, compared to matched district rate of 11 per 100).

Figure 19: 2000-2001 INVEST Participant Discipline Referrals in 1999-2000 and 2000-01



Source: AISD Student Discipline Records

Because only 10 students completed Positive Families, results regarding participants in this program should be interpreted cautiously. However, on average, 2000-2001 participants' rate of referrals for abusive conduct toward both adults and students was lower in 2000-2001 than in 1999-2000, as targeted. Although their own rate of drug referrals did increase during the same period, those students were not targeted for, nor does the Positive Families curriculum emphasize, substance use prevention. Compared to district rates for grade-level matched students, Positive Families participants had higher referral rates for drug offenses and for abusive conduct toward students in 2000-2001.

In 2000-2001, the limited number of Positive Families participants sometimes led to inefficient use of resources (i.e., facilitators being paid to teach Positive Families classes that were not full, while INVEST classes were filled beyond capacity). In addition, as reported by program facilitators, students intended for Positive Families

classes were sometimes folded into an INVEST class when there were not enough students signed up for a Positive Families class. Furthermore, Positive Families student participants have demonstrated a need of substance use prevention intervention, as evidenced by their discipline rates. It is therefore highly recommended that these two programs be officially merged into one. By combining the classes, students can be more evenly distributed among facilitators, and all participants will be exposed to the substance use prevention component of the curriculum.

CAMPUS BASED PROGRAMS

The Title IV campus based programs are designed to encourage schools to address SDFSC issues that are most salient to each individual campus. All AISD campuses and those Austin-area private nonprofit schools and neglected or delinquent facilities that are within AISD boundaries are eligible to receive Title IV funds on a per-pupil basis to initiate their own activities.

Grant guidelines and budget-planning forms were sent to each campus in the fall semester. Each principal appointed a campus staff member to act as a point of contact for SDFSC and to help develop and implement the campus plan. Plans for SDFSC funds were reviewed by the grant manager and budget specialist to verify that each campus' proposed program plans and expenditures were aligned with Title IV grant goals and the campus improvement plans. Once plans were approved, the funds were made available to campuses.

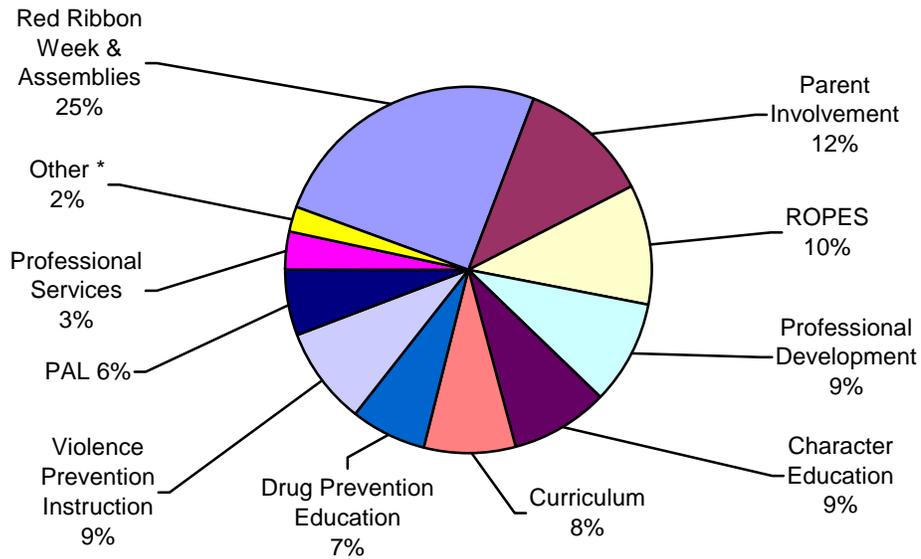
For the 2000-2001 school year, each campus was allocated \$2.00 per student (approximately \$168,000 in total campus allocations). This amount represents a 50% reduction from the previous year's allotment of \$4.00 per student and was determined based on the total grant amount, funds required to support districtwide programs, and the total number of students and campuses participating in the grant.

Campuses used their funds for a variety of activities and programs (Figure 20). While a quarter of campus funds were spent on various types of classroom-based education (character education, drug prevention, and violence prevention), the largest portion of funds (25%) was spent on one-time events, assemblies, and activities associated with Red Ribbon Week, a national drug-prevention awareness campaign. This

year, a districtwide initiative to get parents involved contributed to an increased percentage of the funding being used for activities that brought parents into the schools (up to 12% in 2000-01 from 10% in 1999-2000). At the end of the school year, campuses reported on the outcomes of the Title IV activities at each of their sites.

Campuses used a range of methods to assess their local programs, including changes in: participation rates; campus discipline rates; TAAS scores; attendance rates; and student skills, knowledge, and attitudes observed by teachers or measured by pre- and post-tests. Overall, campuses reported positive outcomes as a result of their programs, for example: decreased discipline referral rates, increased student knowledge regarding the dangers of substance use, increased student demonstration of conflict resolution and violence prevention skills, increased parent participation (e.g., PTA attendance), increased community involvement, and decreased absenteeism and suspension rates. Many campuses indicated their plans for adaptation, improvement, or discontinuation of specific campus program elements for the following year.

Figure 20: Campus Based Programs Expenditures, 2000-2001



* "Other" includes: Before/After School Activities, Community Activities, DARE, and School Safety.

Source: SDFSC Program Records

While 18% of AISD Title IV funding was allotted for campus-based initiation of drug and violence prevention activities, campuses have not always used their money as efficiently as possible. For example, despite research that shows that programs with ongoing, sustained efforts are most effective, campuses continue to use a great amount of funds (25%) to support one-time events, assemblies, and activities associated with National Red Ribbon Week. New Title IV requirements for funds to be spent on “scientifically based” programs necessitates that campuses make careful decisions about how they utilize their funds. More structured guidelines should be provided to campuses regarding the programs that they may implement on their campuses. This will ensure districtwide compliance with this new federal requirement.

PART 3: AISD TITLE IV DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL SUPPORT COMMUNITY SPECIALISTS

Five School Support Community Specialists (SSCSs) were instrumental in providing guidance and monitoring of campus-based Title IV activities. Their salaries were supported 75% by Title IV funds. Each SSCS was responsible for one of the five organizational areas of the district, comprised of approximately 20 campuses each. The SSCSs primary function was to help the campuses to develop and implement plans for their Title IV funds and to assist campus contacts with the evaluation of their Title IV programs and activities.

Interviews with the SSCSs revealed that they believed they only achieved mixed effectiveness in their positions this year. Two accomplishments noted were the increase in the number of planning forms returned to the grant office and greater campus participation in Title IV activities. Additionally, they recognized that their work with the campuses over the past couple of years has resulted in the campus contacts having a better understanding of the Principles of Effectiveness and therefore a better ability to plan appropriate and effective drug and violence prevention programs. However, despite these positive accomplishments, many remarked that they were feeling frustrated and ineffective in their positions due to some of the structural constraints of the job. For example, the SSCSs report to the director of school support services as well as to the area superintendents. They also receive additional direction and some of their assignments from the Title IV grant manager. As a result of reporting to multiple “supervisors,” the SSCSs felt pulled in many directions. In addition, this reporting structure resulted in problems for the SSCSs, such as being frequently removed from their assigned Title IV duties to complete other, tangentially related tasks. In particular, they spent a great deal of time during the Fall semester working on dropout recovery. While dropout recovery efforts are important to the school district, it is questionable if it is an appropriate duty to be supported by Title IV funds, which puts the district at risk of noncompliance.

Some of the SSCSs reported feeling pulled between what they knew their responsibilities to the grant were and what their different supervisors were asking them to

do. As Title IV is not the central duty of the director of school support or the area superintendents, these individuals have priorities other than the goals and directions of the district's Title IV program. Resultantly, the SSCSs said they were not able to put the amount of effort necessary into their primary responsibility of working with the campuses, and said that they then felt that they were admonished for not being as effective in their assigned position as they might have been had they been given the time or resources to do their jobs. It is therefore recommended that supervision of the SSCSs be assigned to a single supervisor or department versed in the Title IV grant goals, objectives, and restrictions, and that a clear job description be developed for the SSCS position.

COUNSELING SERVICES

For the 2000-2001 school year, two full-time drug prevention counselors, one at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and one at Garza Independence High School, and a program specialist in the department of Guidance and Counseling were funded through the grant. Both ALC and Garza High School are considered special campuses in AISD and extra support of additional counselors for students who may be experiencing substance abuse problems or who are at risk for doing so is warranted due to the higher concentration of these types of students at these two campuses. The program specialist in the Guidance and Counseling department works with school counselors districtwide.

The ALC is a campus for middle and high school students who have been removed from their regular campus for discipline violations. The role of the drug prevention counselor at the ALC is multifaceted. In addition to conducting classroom presentations to students on drugs and alcohol, she was responsible for student intake, crisis intervention, meeting with students individually and in weekly groups regarding drug and alcohol issues, meeting with parents, transitioning students back to their home school, making referrals for additional services or treatment, and working with community agencies (e.g., Phoenix House and Safe Place) to coordinate additional drug and violence prevention resources coming into the school. An anonymous survey of students conducted by the drug prevention counselor revealed that the services provided were having a positive effect. For example, nearly 85% of those surveyed claimed to

have reduced or discontinued their substance use. Students also reported to her their experiences of thinking through the consequences before doing drugs and, resultantly, refraining.

Garza Independence High School provides an alternative high school setting with an open enrollment policy and flexible class scheduling. Students must apply to be enrolled at Garza and on average are on grade level but at risk for dropping out of school for reasons such as being a teen parent, using substances, or experiencing personal or family problems. The role of the drug prevention counselor at Garza encompasses a variety of responsibilities, including planning and implementing the school's Title IV campus-based programs, being a member of the campus Impact Team, providing training for all Garza teachers on the solution focused approach, and facilitating three different student groups. In addition, he was the primary academic counselor for one-third of the Garza students, and was the counselor to whom students would be referred if there were suspicion of substance use at school.

The program specialist in Guidance and Counseling, half funded through the grant, was responsible for developing and updating AISD's *Live This!* guidance curriculum, which includes an emphasis on both responsible behavior and conflict management, two objectives closely linked to the Title IV goals. In addition, the program specialist was responsible for orientation of new counselors and staff development for experienced counselors. Many community organizations were brought in by the program specialist to train staff on a variety of topics relevant to the goals of Safe and Drug Free Schools including bully-proofing schools, alienated youth, victim services, and the differently wired child.

Many of the services provided by all three counselors are relevant to the Title IV program goals and objectives. However, it is unclear that they are truly supplemental to the existing resources. As a result, the district risks noncompliance with federal prohibitions against supplanting district support for required services with federal funds.

CURRICULUM SUPPORT

INSTRUCTIONAL COORDINATORS

Assistance was provided to district and campus staff through two science and health instructional coordinators from the Department of Curriculum (salaries partially funded through Title IV, one at 45%, the other at 25%). These instructional coordinators assisted schools in aligning the goals of science and health curricula with the goals of the Title IV program and their campus improvement plans regarding health and safety. The coordinators made campus visits and gave advice to campus instructional personnel on the availability of prevention curriculum resources and supplemental instruction materials that bridged both science/health and SDFSC prevention topics. One of the instructional coordinators organized staff training for Project ALERT (see below) and co-chaired the district's SDFSC Advisory Council.

PROJECT ALERT

Project ALERT is the district-adopted drug prevention curriculum for middle school students. During the 2000-01 school year, 23 teachers and other staff were trained in Project ALERT, bringing the total to 64 since the program was initiated at AISD in the spring of 2000. All trained teachers and staff were surveyed regarding their experiences with Project ALERT and 27 (42%) returned completed surveys. Of these, only 16 individual teachers (59%) implemented Project ALERT in their 6th thru 8th grade classes. Overall, the teachers provided a positive evaluation of Project ALERT, with the majority finding that the program was well designed, effective, and easy to use. Unfortunately, despite being named one of only nine "exemplary" prevention programs by an expert panel at the U.S. Department of Education, it is underutilized in AISD because it is not a mandatory curriculum.

Survey results suggested a need for improvement in just two areas. First, a large proportion of teachers (45%) indicated that most students did *not* complete the take-home activities. Second, the majority of teachers either did not know how most parents responded to their children participating in Project ALERT (53%), or felt that the parents did not respond well to it (16%). All teachers who did teach Project ALERT taught Lessons 1 through 3, covering the consequences of smoking cigarettes and marijuana,

and of drinking. However, beginning with Lesson 4, teachers became increasingly less likely to use the subsequent lessons and many reported modifying individual lessons to adapt to time constraints and to combine Project ALERT with *Making Healthy Choices*, AISD's health curriculum (Appendix C). The primary reason cited by the remaining 11 teachers for not implementing Project ALERT was "lack of time."

Stronger support for implementation of this curriculum is needed to make it effective at the district level. Campus administrators need to have more information about the program so that they can support their teachers in becoming trained and finding classroom time to implement the program. While it has been "adopted" by the district, relatively few teachers and campuses are utilizing this resource.

ADMINISTRATION AND EVALUATION

GRANT MANAGER AND BUDGET SPECIALIST

During 2000-2001, grant funds supported a decreased portion of the salaries of both the grant manager (25%, down from 50% in 1999-2000) and the budget specialist (50%, down from 75%). However, the duties of these individuals remained fairly stable. The grant manager was again responsible for approving Title IV campus and program expenditures, maintaining communication with federal and state entities to ensure district program compliance with grant regulations, monitoring and planning the implementation of all grant activities and initiatives, informing the district's SDFSC Advisory Council of all relevant grant information, and maintaining contact with district program staff regarding the grant. The budget specialist handled all processing of requests for Title IV funds and expenditures, and managed accounting procedures associated with grant funds. In addition, the budget specialist assisted the evaluator in detailing the allocations and expenditures for required reporting to the TEA.

EVALUATOR

One full-time evaluator in the Office of Program Evaluation was responsible for working with district and program staff to analyze district needs, evaluate all Title IV funded programs and activities in the district, and gather data from the private schools and neglected or delinquent facilities within AISD boundaries that received Title IV

funding. Some additional responsibilities of the evaluator included: providing technical assistance in planning, needs assessment, and evaluation to campus contacts and district program managers; coordination with the grant manager to ensure district and campus compliance with federal and state mandates of the grant; presentation of evaluation information to the district's SDFSC Advisory Council and to other community groups (e.g., Underage Drinking Prevention Task Force, Community Action Network, etc.); preparation and distribution of the required annual TEA Title IV evaluation report, as well as the annual AISD Title IV narrative report; and collaboration with the grant manager and community members in writing the evaluation component of several grant proposals submitted to state and federal agencies to supplement Title IV funding of safe and drug free schools in AISD.

As a result of a reduction in available Title IV funds, the evaluation budget for the Title IV program was reduced from 1.65 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) in 1999-2000 to 1.0 FTE in 2000-2001. This reduction in personnel impacted the evaluation by limiting the amount of data available for examination of the processes that impact programs. For example, information regarding the INVEST and Positive Families Programs came strictly from district discipline data this year, as there was no time to conduct focus groups with students or parent phone interviews as was done in the previous year. Additional reductions in the 2001-2002 school year cut the evaluation position to 0.5 FTE. This further diminished the utility of the evaluation to provide necessary information used to assist the grant manager and program managers in making program improvements.

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, aside from diminishing funds, the greatest challenge facing the Title IV program in AISD is that fiscal responsibilities for the Safe and Drug Free Schools program are divided among many AISD staff who have divergent interests and areas of expertise. Synchronization across unique aspects of the program is often difficult. Supervisors from several different areas oversee discrete slices of the Title IV program. While they may be aware of how Title IV works within their area, they are less likely to see the larger picture or the districtwide goals for Title IV because there is little coordination across areas. In effect, these supervisors end up sometimes working at cross-purposes to one another and to the direction that those intimately involved in the grant planning (e.g., grant manager, advisory council, etc.) are trying to take the program. This phenomenon is most clearly demonstrated with the ROPES program and with the School Support and Community Specialists positions.

For example, while one supervisor is making efforts to expand the ROPES program (e.g., building a new course), another makes cuts in that area (e.g., eliminating a staff position); each negates the work the other has done. School Support Community Specialists are frequently pulled off of their primary Title IV duties in order to attend to tangentially related needs within the district. Supervision of the Title IV program needs to be centralized to ensure a cohesive, unified approach to prevention efforts as well as effective use of SDFSC funds in the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERALL GRANT PROGRAM

- €# Improve the coordination and supervision of Title IV programming and funds to ensure effective use of SDFSC funds in the district.

STUDENT PROGRAMS

PAL

- ⚡ Conduct further investigation of the effectiveness of the PAL program for the PALee students. Specifically, longitudinal outcomes for PALee should be examined.
- ⚡ Investigate possible solutions to the challenge of providing transportation of PAL students to PALee schools. The program is limited, and possibly creating a legal liability for the district, by reliance on PAL students and teachers to drive PALs to PALee campuses.
- ⚡ Improve PAL scheduling by allowing more interaction time between PALs and PALees in order to provide more beneficial impact for students.

ROPES

- ⚡ Reinforce the drug, alcohol, and tobacco avoidance message by insuring that teachers more consistently administer Phase IV of the ROPES program once students are back on their own campus.
- ⚡ Use available resources more effectively and serve a greater number of students by expanding the existing AISD ROPES capacity rather than spending Title IV funds on ROPES vendors outside of the district.
- ⚡ Place more emphasis on using the ROPES program as an opportunity to expand parent involvement.

INVEST and Positive Families

Merge Positive Families students into INVEST classes for the following reasons:

- ⚡ The curricula are very similar;
- ⚡ Few students participate in Positive Families and the classes often do not have enough students to justify the expenditure of a separate facilitator. Resultantly, the students are occasionally being folded into INVEST classes already; and
- ⚡ As evidenced by their increased rate of substance-related referrals during the year following participation in Positive Families, students typically referred to

this program demonstrated that they would benefit from the additional curricular component of substance use prevention provided by INVEST.

Campus Based Programs

Provide more guidance to campuses to assist their planning of prevention activities:

- ⌘ Provide a summary of AISD substance use and violence trends to all schools (administrators and SDFSC coordinators) to assist them in planning prevention activities.
- ⌘ Provide continued support to campuses to ensure that Title IV monies are spent in a timely manner.
- ⌘ Provide more structured guidelines to campuses regarding the programs that they may implement on their campuses in order to ensure districtwide compliance with the new federal requirement that funds be spent only for proven effective, research based, programs.
- ⌘ Provide a concentrated effort during the upcoming school year to educate and intervene with 2001-02 11th grade students, who have demonstrated 2 consecutive years of elevated substance use.
- ⌘ Increased emphasis on parent involvement and education regarding student substance and violence issues since kids who perceive that their parents are involved report less substance use.
- ⌘ Educate both parents and students about appropriate and effective ways to help a child or peer with a drug or alcohol problem, and educate parents about how to identify those who may not confide.

DISTRICTWIDE SUPPORT SERVICES

- ⌘ Align salaries the amount of effort toward and responsibility for SDFSC grant goals and objectives of support personnel.

School Support and Community Specialists

- €# Assign supervision of the SSCSs to a single supervisor or department, versed in the Title IV grant goals, objectives, and restrictions.
- €# Develop a clear job description, including specific duties and assignments to avoid charging SSCSs with inappropriate assignments and repeating the past predicament of pulling them in divergent directions. Insure that these duties are directly relevant to the Title IV grant goals and objectives.

Counseling Services

- €# Limit the duties of the grant counselors at ALC and Garza High School to supplemental activities that directly contribute to school safety and drug prevention. Some of their current duties are putting the grant at risk of supplanting funding that should be provided by the district.
- €# Reduce the portion of the Guidance and Counseling program specialist's salary that is funded by Title IV. As the program specialist works with all counselors district wide, on all aspects of the guidance and counseling curriculum, the portion of her salary funded by Title IV should be more reflective of the proportion of her job that is directly related to promoting safe and drug free schools. This is another area at risk of noncompliance regarding supplanting district funds with federal funds.

Curriculum Support

- €# Reduce the portion of the curriculum specialists' salaries that are funded by Title IV. Because the curriculum specialists are responsible for all health and science curriculum throughout the district, the portion of their salaries funded by Title IV should be more reflective of the proportion of their jobs that are directly related to promoting safe and drug free schools. Again, the district is at risk of noncompliance regarding supplanting district funds with federal funds here.

- €# Limit future Project ALERT training sessions to those who intend to implement the curriculum in the middle school classroom in order to make the best use of trainer time and material resources.
- €# Continue a strong emphasis on substance use prevention programs in the Middle Schools. Specifically, efforts to implement Project ALERT, a program deemed “exemplary” by the U.S. Department of Education, should be expanded.
- €# Raise the awareness levels of teachers and administrators regarding student alcohol use through more effective professional development.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS

Table A1: In-Kind Services Provided by Community Agencies*

Agency	Services Provided						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
YWCA	X		X	X	X	X	
Phoenix House	X		X				
Life Works	X	X	X	X	X		X
Safe Place	X	X	X	X			
Communities in Schools		X	X	X	X		X
Boys & Girls Club	X					X	
Austin Child Guidance Center		X	X		X		
Texas Underage Drinking Prevention Program		X					
American Cancer Society		X					
Center for Attitudinal Healing		X	X				
Institute for Weapon Free Youth	X	X					
Out Youth		X	X				
Central East Austin Community Organization						X	

1. Curriculum-based prevention education instruction (short and long-term)
2. Information dissemination (including presentations and information distribution)
3. Counseling services (individual and support groups)
4. Screening and referrals
5. Structured activity groups (e.g., social/emotional skills focus)
6. Mentoring
7. Case management

* This list includes examples of in-kind services related to SDFSC that were provided by community agencies. It is neither a complete list of agencies, nor is it an exhaustive list of all services provided.

APPENDIX B: SUBSTANCE USE AND SAFETY SURVEY DATA

Figure B1. 2001 Percentage of AISD Students Reporting Ever Using Other Substances

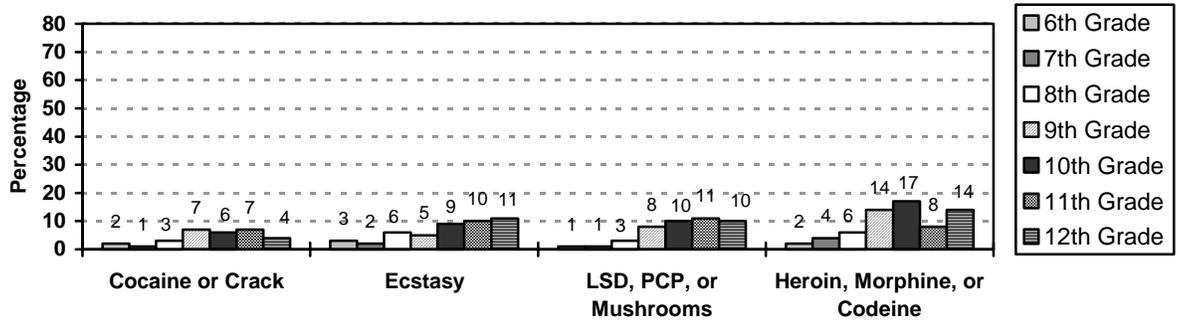
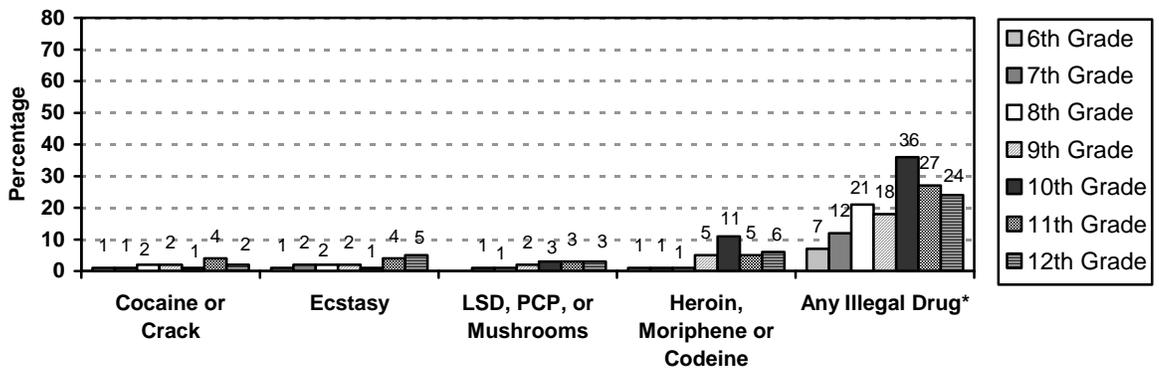


Figure B2. Percentage of Students Reporting Recent Drug Use (past month)



* Any Illegal Drug includes reported use of one or more of the following within the past 30 days: marijuana; inhalants; cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, Mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine.

Figure B3. Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Alcohol

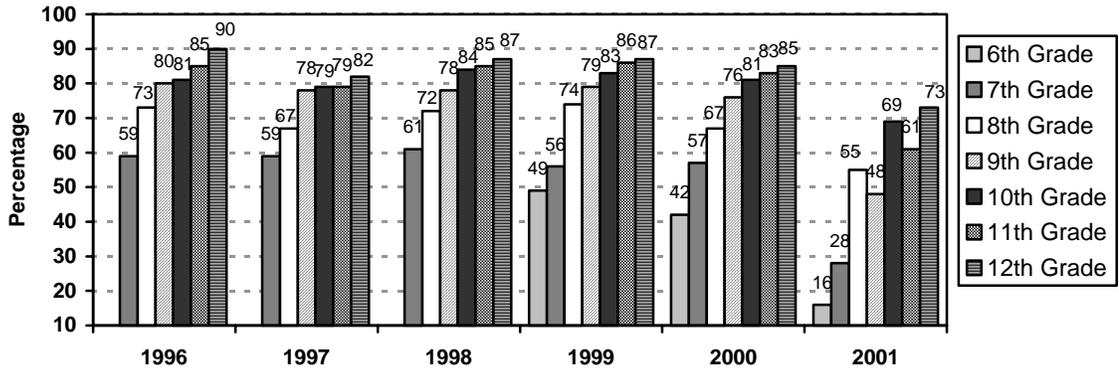


Figure B4. Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Tobacco

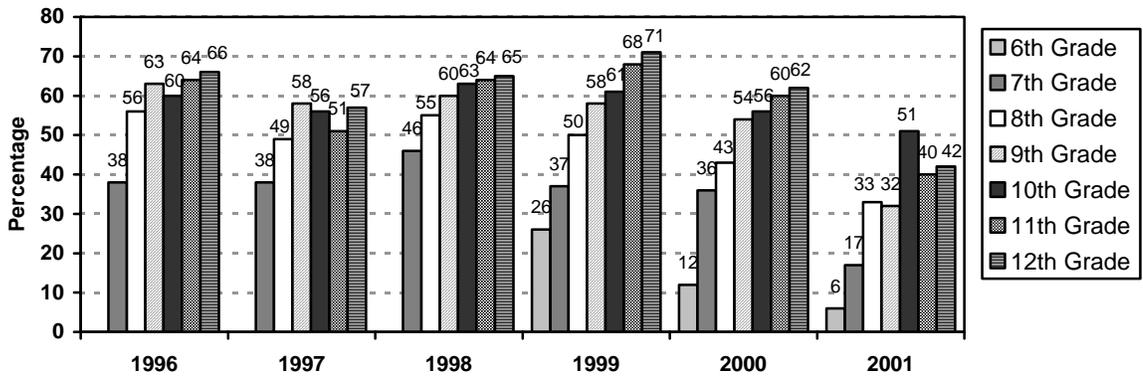


Figure B5. Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Marijuana

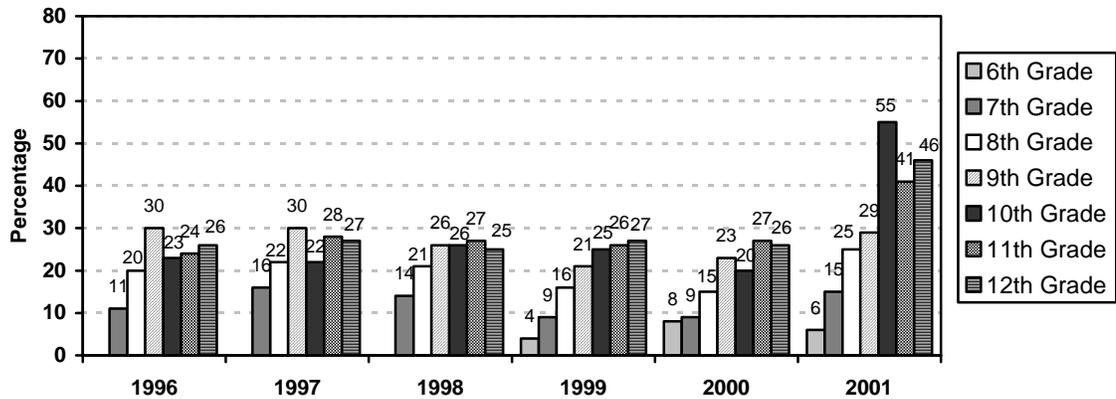


Figure B6. Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Inhalants

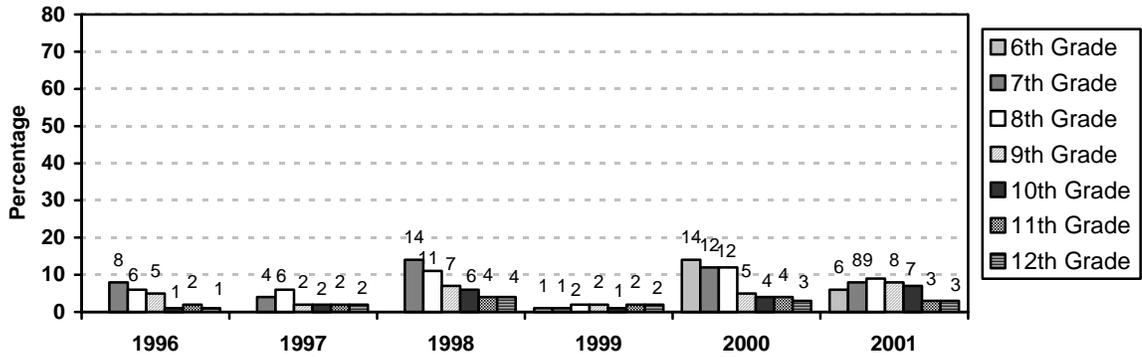
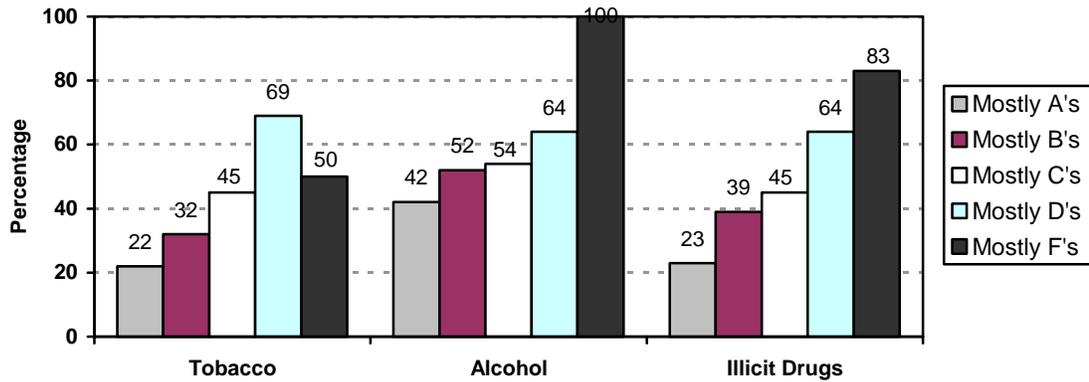


Figure B7: Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Substances by Typical Grades Received



* *Illicit Drug Use* includes reported use of one or more of the following: marijuana; inhalants; cocaine or crack; ecstasy; LSD, Mushrooms, or PCP; or heroin, codeine, or morphine.

Figure B8: Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Substances, 8th Grade: AISD 2000 vs. NIDA 2000

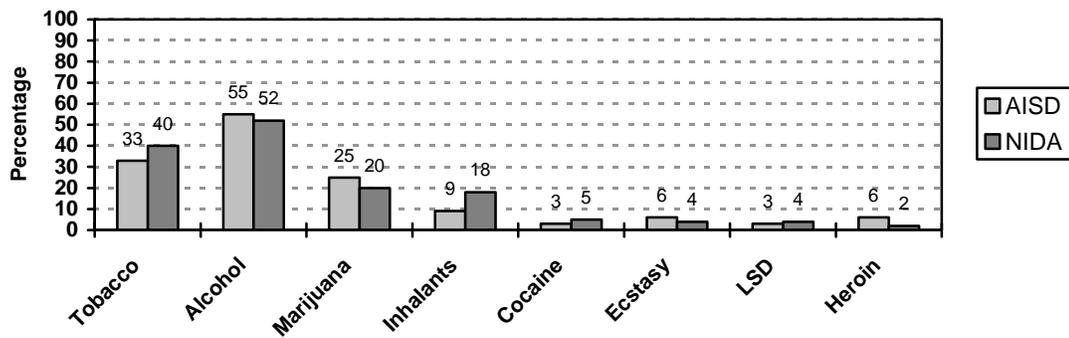


Figure B9: Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Substances, 10th Grade: AISD 2000 vs. NIDA 2000

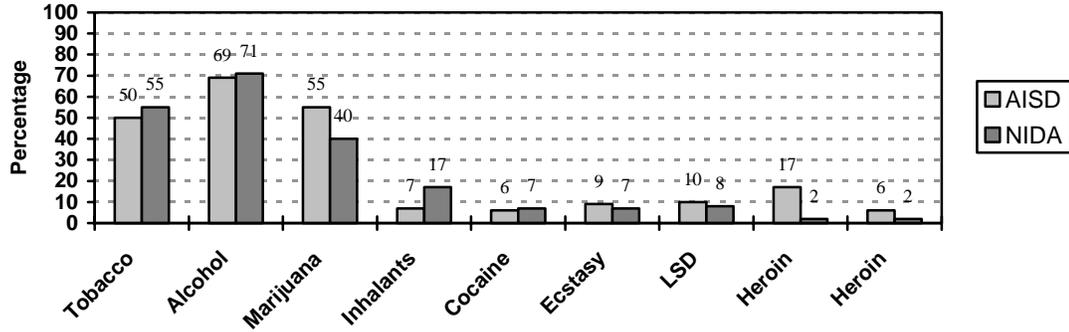


Figure B10: Percentage of Students Reporting Ever Using Substances, 12th Grade: AISD 2000 vs. NIDA 2000

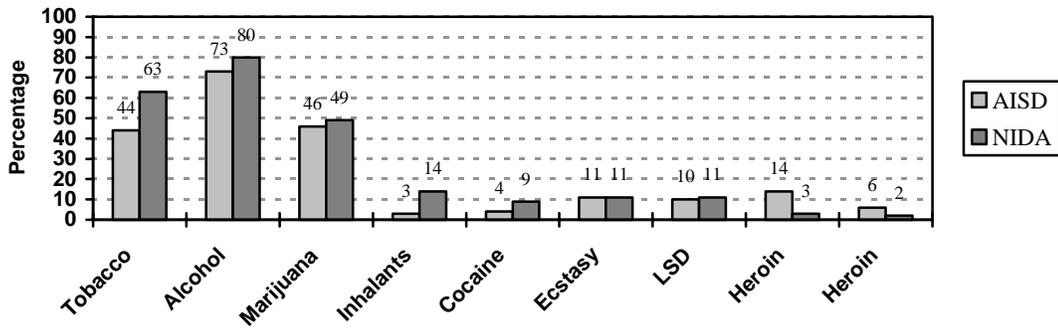
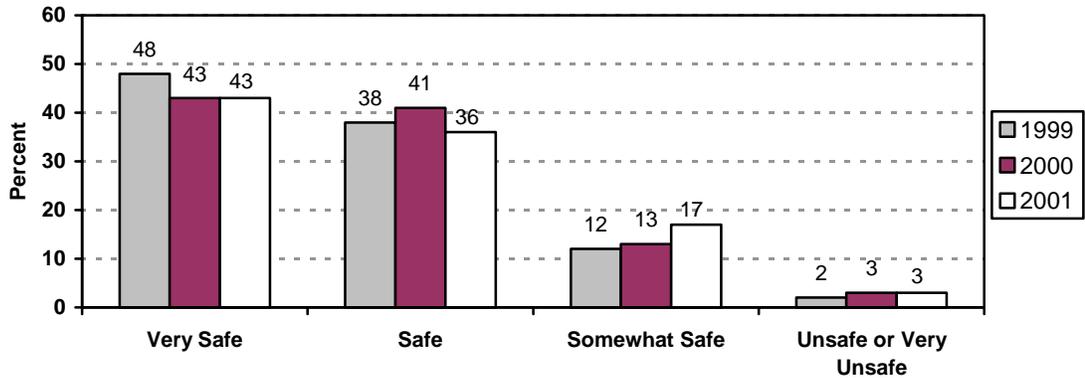


Figure B11: Staff Perceptions of Safety at School 1999-2001



Source: 1999- 2001 AISD Employee Coordinated Survey

Table B1: AISD Teacher and Campus Administrator Estimates of Prevalence of Student Substance Use at Their School, 2000-01

Substance	Student Use Estimated by..	Estimated Percentage of Students Using Substances Two or More Times Per Year										Actual % of Students Reporting Monthly Use	
		Zero	1-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%		91-100%
Tobacco													
	Campus Administrator	6%	50%	6%	13%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Middle/JH School Teacher	1%	12%	12%	16%	9%	9%	7%	7%	1%	1%	0%	5% ^a
	High School Teacher	0%	4%	5%	9%	21%	17%	19%	9%	1%	1%	2%	19% ^b
Alcohol													
	Campus Administrator	0%	33%	11%	22%	11%	11%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	
	Middle/JH School Teacher	0%	13%	11%	9%	13%	9%	9%	4%	4%	1%	0%	15% ^a
	High School Teacher	0%	2%	0%	6%	7%	7%	20%	7%	17%	12%	8%	39% ^b
Marijuana													
	Campus Administrator	18%	36%	18%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Middle/JH School Teacher	0%	20%	16%	13%	14%	4%	1%	6%	1%	0%	0%	9% ^a
	High School Teacher	0%	5%	3%	14%	18%	13%	17%	7%	6%	1%	3%	22% ^b

* Row percentages do not add to 100. The remaining respondents stated that they did not know.

a - Valid percent of responding middle and junior high school students,

b - Valid percent of responding high school students

Source: Employee Coordinated Survey and 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

In Table A1, note that 15% of middle school students reported using alcohol on at least a monthly basis, but 13% of the middle school teachers surveyed believed that only 10% or less of the students at their school had used alcohol 2 or more times in the past year. At the high school level, 39% of students report at least monthly alcohol use, while 8% of teachers assumed 30% or less have used alcohol 2 or more times in the past year. One third of all middle and high school campus administrators estimated that 10% or less of students had used alcohol 2 or more times in the past year.

Table B2: Student Perceptions of Safety at School

How safe do you feel when you are at school?	Middle School and Jr. High Students (n=557)	High School Students (n=476)	Total (n=1033)
Very safe	11%	17%	13%
Safe	41%	42%	41%
Somewhat safe	40%	36%	38%
Unsafe	6%	4%	5%
Very unsafe	4%	2%	3%

Middle School and Jr. High = 6th – 8th Grade, and High School = 9th – 12th Grade

*Source: 2001 AISD Substance Use and Safety Survey

APPENDIX C: STUDENT PROGRAM SURVEY DATA

PAL SURVEY DATA

All PALs and PALees were surveyed once in the fall semester and again in the spring semester to assess any changes in their perceptions or self-reported behaviors over the course of being involved in the PAL program throughout the year. In the fall, 261 completed surveys were received in the Office of Program Evaluation from PAL students and 359 from PALees. In the spring, the response rate was slightly better, with 303 PALs and 415 PALees. It should be noted that the PALee participation rate in the survey is low due to the fact that PALees who were below the 4th grade level (approximately 30% of all PALees) were not asked to participate in the survey.

For the most part, there were few changes in the perceptions and self-reported behaviors of the PALs between the fall and spring semesters. Again, this may be, at least in part, due to the selection process involved in becoming a PAL. Many of the survey items may reflect a ceiling effect because PALs are specifically chosen to be mentors due to their self-confidence and perceived ability to be positive role models for younger students. For example, the vast majority of PALs in both the fall and spring semesters reported that they “*most of the time*” or “*all of the time*”: felt good about themselves, experienced positive relationships with others, made good decisions, handled conflict with others positively, and communicated with others effectively. However, there was a decrease by spring semester in the percent of PALs who reported that they successfully avoided alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (78% vs. 64%). This seems to mirror districtwide trends of more substance use occurring in the spring semester.

The PALee surveys revealed no significant changes in perceptions or self-reported behaviors between the first and second semesters. Most PALees (greater than 80%) reported in both the fall and spring that they “*most of the time*” or “*all of the time*”: felt good about themselves, experienced positive relationships with others, made good decisions, tried their best on school work, communicated with others effectively, stayed out of trouble in school, and took responsibility when they did something wrong. In addition, more than 83% of PALees also reported that they avoided drugs and alcohol “*all of the time.*”

Overall, both PALs and PALees reported that they enjoyed participating in the program and the students with whom they were paired. For example, in an open-ended question, over 40% of PALs remarked that the thing they liked best about being in the PAL program was “spending time with” their PALee, and 90% thought that the program could be improved by having more time available to do just that. The PALees mirrored this sentiment with over 44% indicating that the program could be improved if they “spent more time with [their] PAL.” Nearly 40% of PALees reported, “My PAL is nice to me,” and an additional 23% stated, “My PAL is fun.” PALees also reported that their PAL was “helpful” (17%) and “supportive” (18%). An additional 10% of PALees made statements supporting the idea that their PAL was a good role model, such as “My PAL has a positive attitude,” “My PAL does a good job,” “My PAL is cool,” or “I trust my PAL.”

Regarding their experiences in the program, PALs reported that they liked “having a positive effect” on their PALee (20%), “helping others” (16%) and “meeting new people and making new friends” (31%). However, both PALs and PALees expressed the desire for improved coordination of their visits. Some of the suggestions provided by the PALs included: “Don’t have us meet at lunchtime,” “Let [us] meet as a group,” and, “Make sure there is an activity planned.” PALees recommended meeting “at a different time,” and that “the PALs would teach [them] more.”

Both PAL teachers and PALee facilitators were surveyed at the end of the spring semester regarding their experiences with the program and their perceptions of the program’s impact on the students. Eighteen PAL teachers (100%) and thirty-one PALee facilitators (84%) responded to the survey. Overall, the PAL program was viewed as having a positive effect on both PALs and PALees, and most of the teachers and facilitators found it to be a good experience for themselves as well.

Over 94% of PAL teachers felt that the program benefited PAL students in each of the following ways: improved self esteem, improved ability to have positive relationships with others, improved ability to make good decisions, and improved ability to positively handle conflict with peers. In addition, 100% of the PAL teachers believed that PAL student’s ability to communicate effectively with others had improved and over 88% felt that student’s ability to ask for help when they needed it also improved. A large majority (77%) also believed that PAL students had improved in their ability to take

responsibility for their action. Finally, almost all respondents agreed that being a PAL had helped students become better students themselves.

According to the teachers, students participated in a variety of PAL activities, including: one-to-one peer helping and tutoring, class presentations, group volunteer work, team building, small group support activities, new student orientation, sponsoring and assisting with school-wide activities, and community service projects. In an open-response question, teachers said that working with the PAL students was what they liked best about being a PAL teacher. Specifically, some of their comments included: “Working with people who like to help others,” “Working with WONDERFUL students doing community service,” “Being around caring, giving, PALs,” and “Helping students look beyond their own selves and realize the wonderful potential they have to help others.”

While more than half of the PAL teachers (53%) reported that they were performing this job for only the first or second year, 82% expected to return to the program during the following year. Regardless of their years of experience with the program 88% of PAL teachers reported spending extra hours outside of work to complete tasks related to PAL. Twenty-two percent of these reported that they contributed 8 to 9 additional hours per week, 11% reported 3 to 5 hours, and 67% reported up to 2 hours. Teachers reported doing some of the following things during this extra time: meeting on weekends to do volunteer and community service activities with the students, driving the PALs to PALee schools, writing recommendation letters for PALs, nominating PALs for awards, attending the PAL conference with the students, and planning and shopping for PAL activities.

All respondents felt supported by the program manager and felt that the coordination between the PAL teachers and PALee facilitators went well. However, only about half (47%) believed that the program was adequately funded. There were a few PAL teachers who felt unsupported by their principals or other campus staff, and several who had trouble arranging transportation of the PALs to the PALee schools. Some of the suggestions made by PAL teacher for improvements in the PAL program mirrored student responses. Specifically, teachers also mentioned the need to have better scheduling and more time available for the PALs and PALees to spend together.

The majority of PALee facilitators believed that the PALs helped increase PALees' ability to: have positive relationships with others (94%), communicate effectively (84%), ask for help when they needed it (68%), take responsibility for their actions (65%), positively handle conflict with teachers (58%) and peers (58%), and make good decisions (54%). Some also thought that having a PAL increased PALees' participation in school events and extracurricular activities (36%). PALee facilitators reported that as the result of having a PAL, PALees: became more tolerant of other's differences (94%), knew the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol (87%), and became better students (94%). In addition, all PALee facilitators felt that the PALees enjoyed the time they spent with their PAL.

The PALee facilitator role appears to be a bit more transient than that of the PAL teacher. That is, about one third of the PALee facilitators were new to the role this year, and only 65% expected to continue in the role the following year. The majority felt that extra hours were not required by their position (73%), and those who did put in extra time for PAL were able to limit it to less than 2 hours per week. In comparison to the role and hours contributed by the PAL teachers, less coordination may have been necessary since the PALees tended to participate in a smaller range of activities than did the PALs. According to PALee facilitators, PALee students primarily received one-to-one peer assistance (97%) and worked in small groups with a single PAL (70%). A few PALees were matched with a pair of PALs (13%). However, unlike the PALs, most of the PALees did not participate in organized group activities (e.g., community service) with other PALees.

ROPES TEACHER SURVEY DATA

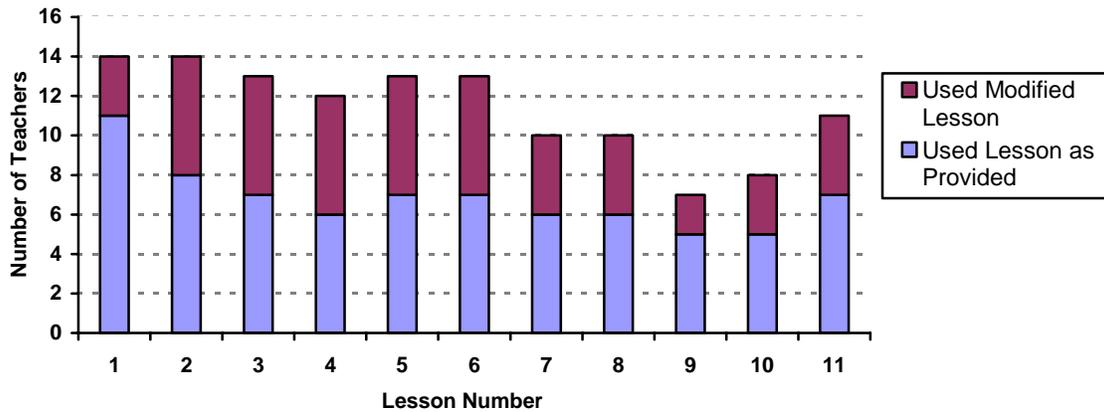
Table B3: Teacher Perceptions of the ROPES Program

Survey Items	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
The workshop was a good use of students' time.	98%	2%	--
Students gained knowledge of their leadership potential.	95%	5%	--
ROPES increased positive student interactions among participants.	88%	10%	2%
Participants are better able to make responsible choices.	85%	13%	2%
Teacher orientation was beneficial to my role as a facilitator.	78% ¹	22% ¹	--
Participants learned about the negative consequences of alcohol and other drug use.	53%	40%	7%

¹This calculation is based on the 49 teachers who answered this question.

PROJECT ALERT TEACHER SURVEY DATA

Figure B12: 2000-2001 Reported Teacher Use of Lessons



- Lesson 1:** Introduction to Project ALERT
- Lesson 2:** Consequences of Smoking Cigarettes and Marijuana
- Lesson 3:** Drinking Consequences and Alternatives
- Lesson 4:** Introduction to Pressures
- Lesson 5:** Social Pressures to Use Drugs
- Lesson 6:** Resisting Internal and External Pressures to Use Drugs

- Lesson 7:** Practicing Resistance Skills
- Lesson 8:** Inhalant Use
- Lesson 9:** Review and Practice of Resistance Techniques
- Lesson 10:** Smoking Cessation
- Lesson 11:** Benefits of not Using Drugs

Source: 2001 Project ALERT Teacher Survey

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Division of Accountability and Information Systems

Joy McLarty, Ph.D.

Office of Program Evaluation

Holly Williams, Ph.D.

Martha Doolittle, Ph.D.

Authors

Cinda L. Christian, Ph.D.

Programmer

Veda Raju



Board of Trustees

Kathy Rider, President

Doyle Valdez, Vice President

Loretta Edelen, Secretary

Johna Edwards

Olga Garza

Rudy Montoya

Ingrid Taylor

Ave Wahrmond

Patricia Whiteside

Superintendent of Schools

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.

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