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ABSTRACT

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, the National Drug Control Strategy (1989-92), the Five-Year State Master Plan to Reduce Drug and Alcohol Abuse in California (1988-92), and the perspectives of education administrators (n=14) of drug prevention programs in select California public secondary schools (1994-95) were analyzed. The primary purpose of the analysis was to gauge the potential that the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has to discourage students from using drugs. Findings disclosed that the federal and California state government developed drug policies that generally are not compatible with the perspectives of the education administrators or the experiences of the target group--students. Furthermore, drug policies incorporated only a small portion of drug causation that theorists, researchers, drug experts, public officials, and community representatives and leaders identified. Moreover, federal and California state government established expectations that education administrators believed school drug prevention programs could not fulfill. Under these conditions, the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has little potential for reducing student drug use. Contains 20 references. (JBJ)

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# The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986: Policy Formation, Causation, and Program Implementation

Prepared for the 1995 AERA Conference, San Francisco, CA  
Division H: School Evaluation and Program Development  
Roundtable Discussion

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**Melody Lark  
April 22, 1995**

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## Abstract

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, the National Drug Control Strategy (1989-92), the *Five-Year State Master Plan to Reduce Drug and Alcohol Abuse in California* (California Master Plan) (1988-92), and the perspectives of education administrators of drug prevention programs in select California public secondary schools (1994-95) were analyzed. The primary purpose of the analysis was to gauge the potential that the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has to discourage students from using drugs.

Fulfilling the purpose of the analysis entailed accomplishing the following four tasks: (a) determining the degree to which federal and California state government drug policies and other documents incorporate drug causation; (b) distinguishing between drug causation that pertains to personal characteristics, personal relationships, and the external environment of students; (c) comparing drug causation at the federal government, California state government, and school levels; and, (d) ascertaining the extent to which education administrators implement school drug prevention programs to address drug causation, and the foci of federal and California state government drug policies - enforcement, prevention, and intervention.

The analysis of federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation disclosed that the federal and California state government developed drug policies that generally are not compatible with the perspectives of the education administrators or the experiences of the target group - students. Furthermore, the federal and California state government's drug policies incorporate such a small portion of drug causation that theorists, researchers, drug experts, public officials, and community representatives and leaders identified. Moreover, the federal and California state government established expectations that the education administrators believe school drug prevention programs cannot fulfill. Under these conditions, the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program

implementation has little potential for reducing student drug use (Elmore, 1979; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983).

This is so because government drug policies don't get at the root cause of student drug use: However horrible their effects, drugs answer a craving in the empty lives of students. Students use drugs as a substitute for unsatisfied basic human needs.

Modifying federal and California state drug policies, improving circumstances in the external environment, increasing the capacity of school drug prevention programs, helping students be optimistic and expand their personal power, and delving more extensively into the reasons that students do and do not use drugs are endeavors that will enable policymakers, program implementors, and students to reduce illegal drug use.

## Introduction

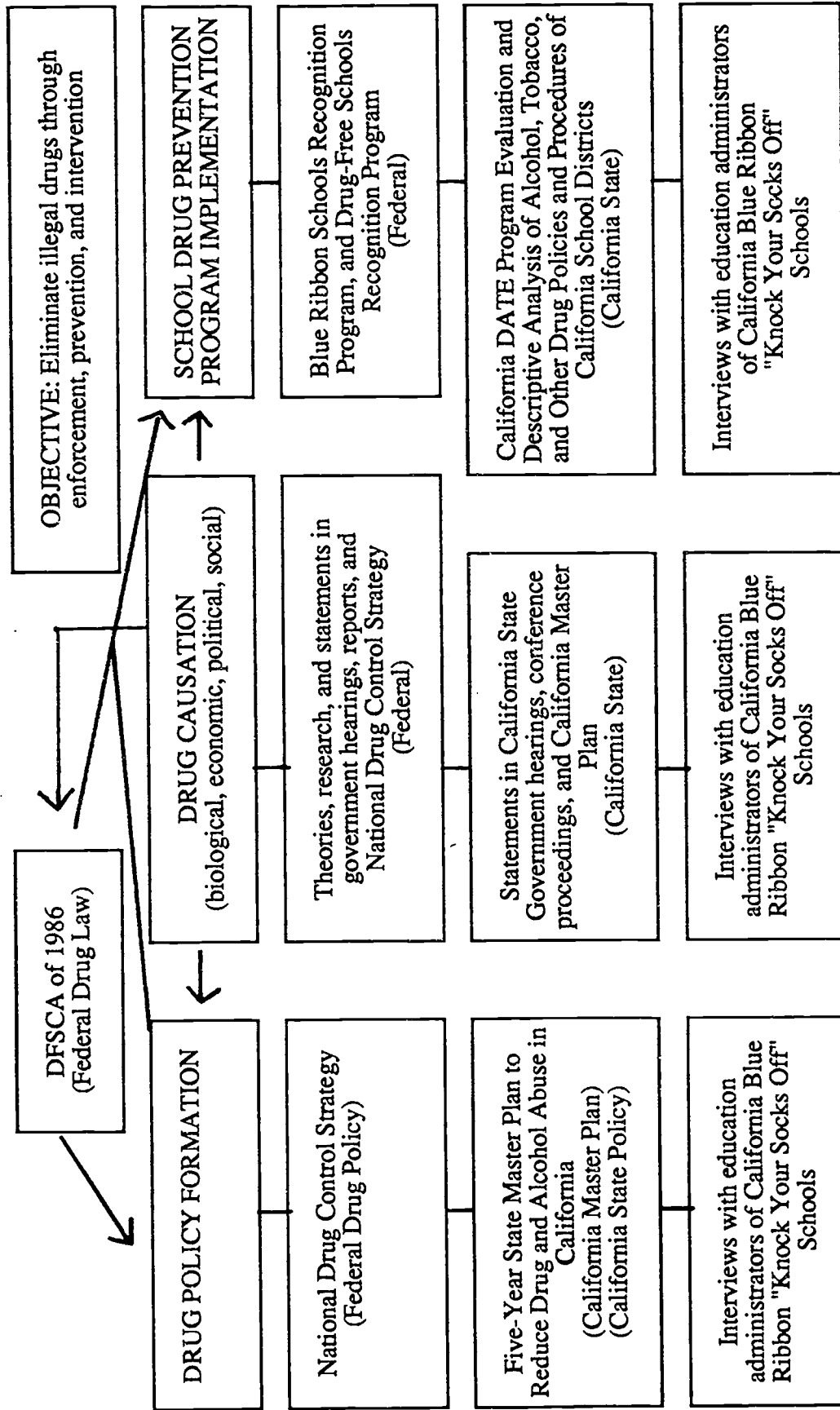
This research project revolves around the relationship between federal and California state government drug law and drug policy formation, causation, and California secondary school drug prevention program implementation.

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA) of 1986 endorses enforcement, prevention, and intervention to reduce illegal drug use. The National Drug Control Strategy uses this endorsement to implement the DFSCA of 1986. The DFSCA of 1986 and Strategy fuel the war on drugs and perpetuate it in schools throughout the nation.

Prior to the first Strategy in 1989, California took its initiative from the DFSCA of 1986 to develop the *Five-Year State Master Plan to Reduce Drug and Alcohol Abuse in California* (California Master Plan) in 1988. To comply with the California Master Plan, California schools are implementing Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Education (DATE) programs.

Figure 1 depicts the interaction between federal and California state government drug law and drug policy formation, causation, and California secondary school drug prevention program implementation.

**Figure 1**  
*The Relationship Between Drug Law, Policy Formation, Causation, and Program Implementation*



As Figure 1 shows, the DFSCA of 1986 sets the parameters for drug policy formation and school drug prevention program implementation. Similarly, drug policy formation sets the tone for school drug prevention program implementation. In contrast to the flow in the relationship between the DFSCA of 1986, drug policy formation, and school drug prevention program implementation, drug causation affects the potential that the federal government has through the DFSCA of 1986, drug policy formation, and school drug prevention program implementation to eliminate, or at least curtail, illegal drug use. In addition, drug causation directly affects drug policy formation and school drug prevention program implementation. Thus, to satisfactorily curtail illegal drug use in the U.S., the federal government must accurately pinpoint drug causation.

### Research Questions

One overarching question steers this research project: What potential do federal and California state government drug policies have to discourage students from using illegal drugs? The answer to this question lies in the answers to eight questions about federal and California state government drug policy formation, drug causation, and drug prevention program implementation in California schools. Questions that relate to federal and California state government drug policy formation are:

1. What are the perceptions that education administrators of California Blue Ribbon schools have of the philosophy of federal and California state government drug policies?
2. Do education administrators of California Blue Ribbon schools perceive the philosophy of federal and California state drug policies to be appropriate and workable?
3. What would education administrators of California Blue Ribbon schools do differently at the federal and California state government, and school levels to discourage students from using illegal drugs?

Questions that pertain to drug causation are:

4. To what extent does the Strategy and California Master Plan account for drug causation: theories; research; statements in federal and California state government hearings, reports, and conference proceedings; and statements in interviews with education administrators of California Blue Ribbon schools?
5. To what extent do the education administrators of California Blue Ribbon schools address drug causation in implementing school drug prevention programs?

Questions that address school drug prevention program implementation are:

6. How prevalent are the foci - enforcement, prevention, and intervention - of the federal and California state government drug policies in education administrators' perceptions of the philosophy that guides drug prevention programs in California Blue Ribbon schools?
7. How prevalent are the foci - enforcement, prevention, and intervention - of the federal and California state government drug policies in education administrators' perceptions of how drug prevention programs in California Blue Ribbon schools discourage students from using drugs?
8. How prevalent are the foci - enforcement, prevention, and intervention - of federal and California state drug policies in education administrators' perceptions of how drug prevention programs in California Blue Ribbon schools can be improved?

## Methodology

The research project encompassed three aspects of drug policy - formation, causation, and program implementation, required three levels of analyses - federal government, California state government, and education administrators of schools.

Federal and California state government drug policy formation were analyzed from the perspectives of education administrators of five California public secondary schools. The U.S. Department of Education, through its 1992-93 Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition Program identified these five schools as "knock your socks off" schools. "Knock your socks off" describes schools that were exemplary among all Blue Ribbon schools during a particular program year. In other words, these are select schools.

The five select schools represent the population of such schools in California, but a sample of the 37 "knock your socks off" schools in the nation. In addition to these five select schools, a pilot school was chosen from the other schools in California that were successful in the 1992-93 Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition Program.

The select and pilot schools in California are ideal for discerning the potential that the relationship between drug policy formation, causation, and school prevention program implementation has to discourage student drug use. One reason that this is so is that California has more public schools and a larger student population than any other state in the nation. And,



California is equal to only one other state, Texas, in the number of "knock your socks off" schools in the 1992-93 Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition Program.

The select and pilot California schools also are ideal for fulfilling the purpose of the research project because they capture some of the attributes of other schools in the nation. The select and pilot California schools vary in population category, student enrollment in schools and school districts, number of public schools in school districts, student enrollment by equivalent grade level, ethnicity, number of limited English proficient students, student languages, number of students who are qualified for discounted lunches and special education services, school environment, and experience of the education administrators.

The project director interviewed nine education administrators of the five select schools; four principals and five full-time DATE coordinators. The project director wanted to interview the principal of each of the select schools, but one principal committed twice by telephone over three months to being interviewed, but never fulfilled that commitment.

In addition to the nine education administrators of the select schools, the project director interviewed the principal and full-time DATE coordinator of the pilot school. The interviews with the education administrators of the pilot school were compared to the interviews with the education administrators of the select schools. Furthermore, the project director interviewed an assistant principal, a district manager of security, and a part-time DATE coordinator in one of the select schools.

Collectively, the project director interviewed twelve education administrators in the select schools, and two education administrators in the pilot school. These 14 education administrators are directly responsible for implementing the DFSCA of 1986, the Strategy, and California Master Plan. Moreover, the education administrators are doing something within their schools that is impressively different from what the education administrators of other schools that participated in the 1992-93 Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition Program are doing to implement education programs.

Any potential that the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has to reduce student drug use that is based on the interviews with the education administrators should be absorbed considering that:

1. The U.S. Department of Education distinguished these schools from other 1992-93 Blue Ribbon Schools in California and in the nation because they have an impressive learning environment, and their alcohol, tobacco, and other drug policies contain elements that discourage student drug use.
2. These schools are doing something right in an era of education bashing.
3. These schools are faced with the same limitations and latitude in federal drug law and policy that other schools in the nation are confronted with.

The perspectives of the education administrators are not intended to be representative of the perspectives of education administrators throughout the nation, or even of education administrators of other Blue Ribbon schools. However, the perspectives of these education administrators are essential to understanding the challenges that education administrators throughout the nation might be experiencing in implementing school drug prevention programs. And, their perspectives will illuminate avenues for success that other schools might not have considered.

The project director conducted the interviews during the six months between July 18, 1994 and January 23, 1995. During the interviews, the education administrators were asked the following questions that pertain to federal and California state drug policy formation. Their responses to these questions were compared to the Strategy and California Master Plan.

1. What do you perceive to be the philosophy of federal and state drug policies?
2. Do you think the philosophy that you perceive to be guiding federal and state drug policies is appropriate? Workable?
3. What would you do differently at the federal, state, and school level to discourage students from using drugs?

In addition to interviewing the education administrators for the analysis of federal and California state drug policy formation, the education administrators were interviewed for the analysis of drug causation. They were asked: "Why do you think students use drugs?" The

education administrators' responses to this question were compared to: drug causation theories (1938-1991); drug causation research (1956-1993); and drug causation statements in federal government hearings and reports (1986-1990), the Strategy (1989-1992), California state government hearings and conference proceedings (1990-1991), and the California Master Plan (1988-1992). These federal and California state documents were published during the Reagan (1981-1989) and Bush (1989-1993) Republican presidential administrations, George Deukmejian's Democratic governorship (1986-1990), and Pete Wilson's California Republican governorship (1991 - ).

Drug causation was categorized according to whether it reflected personal characteristics, personal relationships, or circumstances in the external environment. Personal characteristics and personal relationships can be changed by the individual, family, peers, school, church, and public service organizations. In contrast, circumstances in the external environment are beyond the control of a person; but not the government.

To complement the analysis of drug policy formation and causation, the education administrators were asked the following questions to facilitate an analysis of school drug prevention program implementation. Their responses to these questions were compared to the Strategy and California Master Plan.

1. What is the philosophy that guides drug prevention programs at your school!?
2. How do your drug prevention programs discourage students from using drugs?
3. How can the drug prevention programs at your school be improved to discourage more students from using drugs?

In summary, the interviews with the California education administrators were used to analyze federal and California state drug policy formation and school drug prevention program implementation. Furthermore, theories, research, and statements in federal and California state government documents, and in interviews with the California education administrators were used to analyze drug causation.

## Data Analysis

The following points serve to summarize the data that were analyzed to assess federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation. With respect to federal and California state drug policy formation:

1. The education administrators perceived the philosophy of federal and California state drug policies to address enforcement, prevention, and intervention.
2. The education administrators did not believe that federal and California state drug policies are appropriate or workable.
3. The education administrators offered an abundance of approaches that are different from what the federal and California state government are doing to discourage student drug use. The education administrators' approaches emphasize prevention over enforcement and intervention.

Relative to drug causation:

1. The three categories of drug causation are personal characteristics, personal relationships, and circumstances in the external environment. Some of the personal characteristics are: disease; genetic and learning disorders; pain; lack of self-esteem, self-understanding, confidence, decision-making skills, morals, and values; stress; spiritual disharmony; academic failure; hopelessness; and, unhappiness. Some aspects of personal relationships are: lack of acceptance, parental guidance, role models, love, affection, and attention; and, peer pressure. And, circumstances in the external environment include access to health care; wealth; food; clothing; politics; and, adequate and safe shelter, schools, and communities.
2. The education administrators perceived the federal and California state drug policies to contain very little drug causation.
3. Collectively, the education administrators and statements in federal and California state government documents focus more on personal characteristics than on personal relationships or circumstances in the external environment. Even to the extent that this is so, a quantity of drug causation resides in circumstances in the external environment that the federal and California state government have chosen to ignore in drug policies.
4. The education administrators' inferences to drug causation relative to school drug prevention program implementation is about double their inferences to drug causation relative to federal and California state drug policy formation.

And pertaining to school drug prevention program implementation:

1. The education administrators are more preoccupied with the well-being of students than with the other challenges they encounter in implementing school drug prevention programs.
2. The education administrators perceive prevention and enforcement to have very dominant roles in implementing school drug prevention programs.

3. The education administrators' perceptions show that changing the behavior of students and involving the students' families are important ways that school drug prevention programs are discouraging students from using drugs.
4. The education administrators' perceptions demonstrate the necessity of collaborating and strengthening prevention and intervention methods to improve school drug prevention programs.
5. The relationship between the principals and school district DATE coordinator is not as close in some of the schools as it is in others.

### **Discussion**

The relationship, whether harmonious or conflicting, between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and school drug prevention program implementation determines the potential that the DFSCA of 1986 has to achieve the federal objective of reducing student drug use. Plus, the compatibility between the emphasis that the federal and California state government, and education administrators give to enforcement, prevention, and intervention plays an essential role in achieving the federal objective.

The education administrators and the California Master Plan emphasize prevention over enforcement and intervention to promote the welfare of students. In contrast, the Strategy emphasizes enforcement over prevention and intervention. Table 1 aggregates the dimensions of enforcement, prevention, and intervention that the Strategy, California Master Plan, and education administrators address.

**Table 1**  
*Dimensions of Enforcement, Prevention, and Intervention*

Dimension	Strategy/Tactic/Focus			
	Enforcement	Prevention	Intervention	
Period	Past	Present, future	Past, present, future	
Basis	Factual, objective, evidence of drug use	Potential, risk factors	Factual, objective, evidence of drug use, potential, risk factors	
Reaction	Symptoms	Causes	Symptoms and causes	
Consequences	Punitive	Medical, punitive	Medical, punitive	
Deterrence	Fear	Positive alternatives, protective factors	Positive alternatives, protective factors	
Punishment	Inflicted by others	Inflicted by self and others, and inflicted on others	Inflicted by self and others, and inflicted on others	
Curtailment	Incarceration, treatment, rehabilitation	Health education	Treatment, rehabilitation, health education	
View of individual	Criminal	Human (biological, cognitive/mental, behavioral, psychological, emotional, spiritual, physiological)	Human, patient	

Of the dimensions in Table 1, prevention indicates greater potential for reducing student drug use. Prevention strives to forestall destructive behavior, is riveted on drug causation, insulates students against the temptation of drugs, clarifies how students who use drugs can harm themselves and others as well as expose themselves to harm by others, makes health the pivotal issue, and is human-centric.

Table 1 provides a good rationale for elevating prevention and intervention above enforcement to reduce student drug use: Abraham Maslow's exposition on basic human needs provides another good justification.

### **Basic Human Needs**

Maslow's (1973) hierarchy of basic human needs suggests a relationship between the causes of drug use and the satisfaction of basic human needs (Lark, 1995). In other words, student drug use could be prevented if students' basic needs were satisfied.

The hierarchy includes physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. Whereas physiological needs at the bottom of the hierarchy are the most germane to sustaining human life, self-actualization needs at the top of the hierarchy are not as vital.

Physiological needs are satisfied with food, shelter, sleep, and health. Safety needs are met when fear is absent. Love needs are fulfilled through affection and feelings of belonging. Self-esteem emanates from confidence, self-respect that is related to a high evaluation of self, achievement, adequacy, independence, freedom, and strength. Self-esteem also is a product of the prestige and reputation one achieves from a high evaluation by others, recognition, attention, importance, and appreciation. Self-actualization is the apex of the hierarchy of needs and is realized when one's potential equates to what one is in reality.

Certain preconditions must be present before basic human needs can be met. These preconditions are: the freedom to speak, express feelings and thought, pursue self-interest as long as the interests of others are not infringed upon, obtain information, and seek protection from harm; justice; fairness; and, orderliness (Maslow, 1973, pp. 15-16). These preconditions are

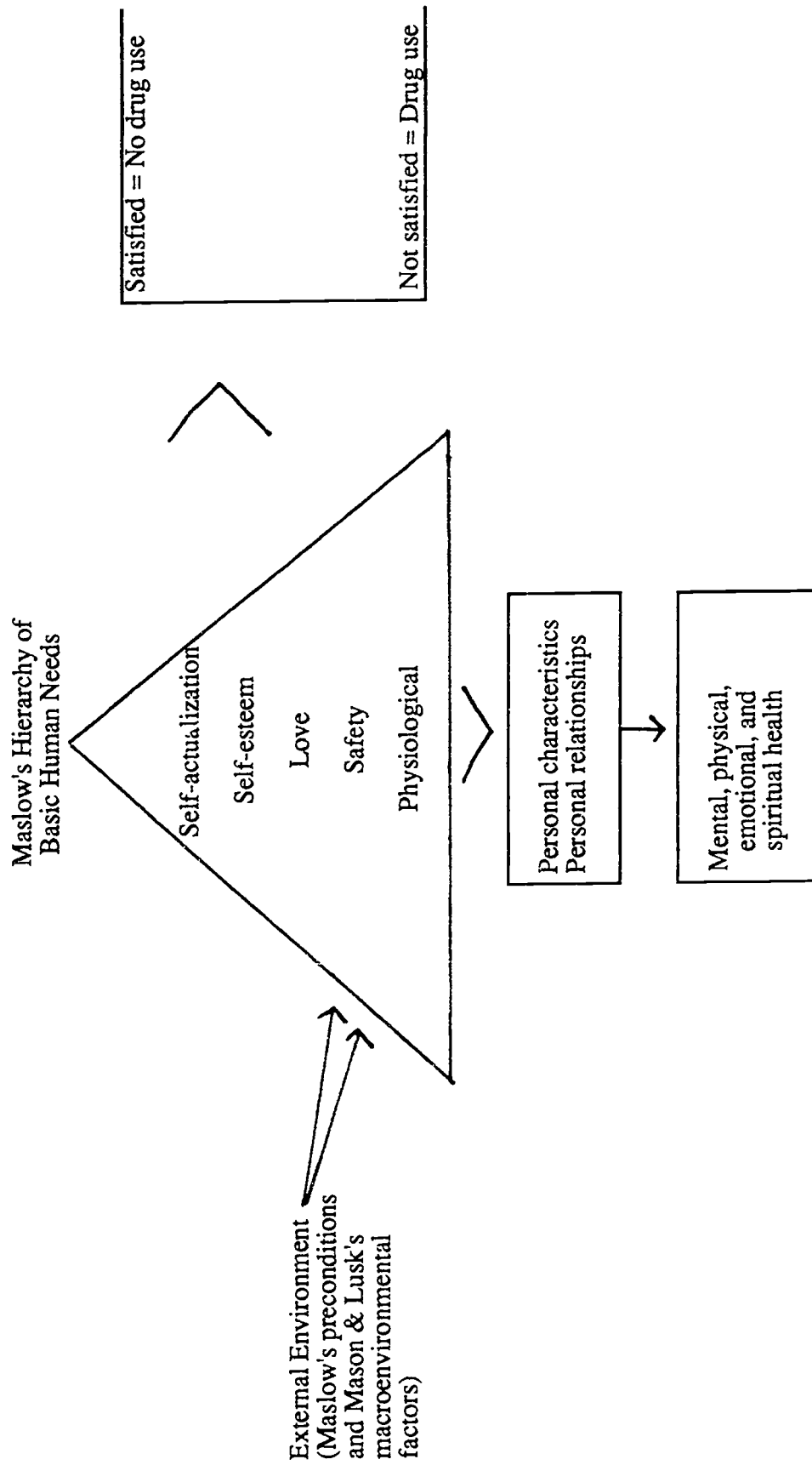
circumstances in the external environment (Lark, 1995) and macroenvironmental factors which the government controls (Mason & Lusk, 1991, p. 271).

Every rung on the hierarchy of basic human needs encompasses the causes of drug use that are associated with personal characteristics and personal relationships. Personal characteristics and personal relationships typify mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Moreover, the causes of drug use that are associated with circumstances in the external environment affect personal characteristics and personal relationships.

Figure 2 exemplifies the relationship between basic human needs and drug causation.



**Figure 2**  
*The Relationship Between Basic Human Needs and Drug Use*



In Figure 2, the degree to which an individual's collective basic human needs are satisfied, and thus an individual experiences mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health, is associated with the degree to which an individual is susceptible to using drugs. Several propositions are related to this assertion:

1. The higher the fulfillment of an individual's collective basic human needs, the healthier an individual is, and the less susceptible an individual is to using drugs.
2. The basic human need that an individual uses drugs as a substitute for is the very need that must be fulfilled, or accepted as an unfulfilled need, before an individual will stop using drugs.
3. An individual can have a basic human need that is not satisfied and not use drugs if that individual identifies the need, accepts that the need is not fulfilled in the present, and has hope while diligently working toward fulfilling that need in the future. An individual must not despair when a need is not immediately gratified.
4. The dimmer an individual believes their prospects are for fulfilling a basic human need, the less likely they are to stop using drugs.
5. An individual who uses drugs as a substitute for a basic human need becomes farther removed from satisfying that need as drug use progresses to drug abuse. Drug abuse, however, does not inevitably follow drug use, and, the transition from drug use to drug abuse is not easily discernible.

What emerges from this discussion of basic human needs is that neither the government nor individuals have absolute control over whether basic human needs are fulfilled. Before basic human needs can be satisfied, the government must establish preconditions that offer an equitable opportunity structure for individuals to satisfy their basic needs, and individuals must take advantage of that opportunity structure.

## Conclusion

The primary thrust of this research project was to determine the potential that the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has to reduce student drug use.

From the education administrators' perspectives, the federal and California state drug policy formation process excluded them and did not reflect their substantial and substantive experiences with students. According to the education administrators, federal and California

state drug policies are the result of a process that centralized control in the government; a top-down approach to policymaking. Unlike the federal and California state government, some of the education administrators would use bottom-up policymaking by including the target population, program implementors who have and have not been successful, researchers, experts, and students who do and do not use drugs.

In addition to the federal and California state drug policy process appearing exclusionary to the education administrators, the federal and California state government did not take full advantage of the drug causation that theorists, reseachers, drug experts, public officials, and community representatives and leaders identified. The federal and California state government acknowledged a few of the causes of student drug use that are attributed to personal characteristics and personal relationships, but ignored the causes that pertain to circumstances in the external environment. All causal variables influence the outcome of school drug prevention program implementation.

In implementing school drug prevention programs, the education administrators emphasize prevention over enforcement and intervention. These programs, primarily through health education classes, attempt to change student behavior. The programs provide students with protective factors by teaching them to understand who they are and want to become, value themselves, discern the types and effects of drugs, resist peer pressure, and get involved in activities that strengthen their wills against drugs.

School drug prevention programs use these protective factors to counter drug causation - personal characteristics, personal relationships, and circumstances in the external environment which are risk factors. The education administrators feel confident about school drug prevention programs being able to positively influence the personal characteristics and personal relationships of students if the programs receive: the commitment of students, teachers, parents, and community service agencies; adequate resources; and the latitude that is necessary to meet the individual needs of students. This has not been the case. Instead, the education

administrators expressed frustration with having insufficient and unstable resources, and restrictions that interfere with program implementation.

The education administrators know that school drug prevention programs can do absolutely nothing about the circumstances in the external environment that promote student drug use except release students to these circumstances every day after school. The government controls circumstances in the external environment that school drug prevention programs are not equipped to change. Thus, the education administrators doubt that the government will make the changes and provide the means that are necessary for the education administrators to achieve the government's policy objectives.

To summarize, the federal and California state government developed drug policies that generally are not compatible with the perspectives of the education administrators or the experiences of the target group - students. Furthermore, the federal and California state government's drug policies incorporate such a small portion of drug causation that theorists, researchers, drug experts, public officials, and community representatives and leaders identified. Moreover, the federal and California state government established expectations that the education administrators believe school drug prevention programs cannot fulfill. Under these conditions, the relationship between federal and California state drug policy formation, causation, and California school drug prevention program implementation has little potential for reducing student drug use (Elmore, 1979; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983).

### **Implications**

The federal government funds enforcement programs at a substantially higher rate than prevention or intervention programs. The federal government's emphasis on enforcement is understandable: The federal government is trying to protect others from the negative consequences that drug users create. Compliance with public policy strongly depends on making drug users, not others, suffer severe negative consequences (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983, p.

37). But must the federal government inflict the negative consequences? And by doing so, doesn't the federal government give drug users an external force to rebel against?

By contrast, the California state government funds prevention and intervention programs at a substantially higher rate than enforcement programs. The California state government and California school drug prevention programs, through their emphasis on prevention, are actually placing a higher value on the negative consequences that drug users can inflict upon themselves if they use drugs to the detriment of their health.

The implication is that because school drug prevention programs are more directly involved with students than enforcement programs, and school drug prevention programs teach students how to avoid self-inflicted health impairment, the federal government should fund school drug prevention programs at a higher rate than enforcement programs.

### **Recommendations**

The federal and California state government should modify drug policies to incorporate the experiences of the education administrators who are implementing programs to reduce student drug use, and the experiences of students whose behavior such programs are attempting to change.

Beyond modifying drug policy, the federal and California state government must make circumstances in the external environment conducive to students satisfying their basic human needs and increase the capacity of school drug prevention programs to help students fulfill their needs.

School drug prevention programs must continue to teach students how to create opportunity regardless of how unpalatable their reality of circumstances in the external environment is. Students must know how to get as close to fulfilling their potential as possible despite this reality. Dreaming, hoping, imagining, visualizing, affirming, and having faith are essential tools to teaching students how to do this.

School drug prevention programs also must teach students how to take care of not only their health, but also to care more about the health of others. The operative questions, then, are: What affect will a behavior that can become addictive have on my mind, body, and soul, and on those of others?; If the addictive behavior harms my mind, body, and soul, how can I derive the effect of the addictive behavior from a beneficial source that will make me feel mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy?

School drug prevention programs, parents, communities, and the federal and California state government must give students reasons to want, and the determination to achieve a lifestyle without drugs. And students must want such a lifestyle, know that they can acquire such a lifestyle, and be willing to do what is within their power to create a better reality for themselves. Creating a better reality is as much an inside as an outside endeavor. The forces within a student must collaborate with the forces external to a student.

The federal and California state government, and schools should expand their exploration of the reasons some students do not use drugs although they are vulnerable to the same drug causation that influences other students to use drugs. In the final report of the National Commission on Drug-Free Schools (*Toward a Drug-Free Generation: A Nation's Responsibility*, 1990, September) two students who do not use drugs gave the reasons, "My parents would kill me," and "I wouldn't want to disappoint my parents" (p. 15). The expectations of parents motivated these students to avoid drugs. Knowing why some students do not use drugs is as essential to drug policy formation, as well as to school drug prevention program implementation, as is knowing why some students use drugs.

In conclusion, despite almost \$43 billion in federal expenditures to enforce tough drug laws between 1988 and 1990 alone, \$1.1 billion of which public schools in the nation received to implement drug prevention programs, students in the U.S. continue to use drugs. The federal and California state government have not reduced student drug use to the level desired, and have little potential for doing so, because they don't get at the root cause of student drug use: However

horrible their effects, drugs answer a craving in the empty lives of students. Students use drugs as a substitute for unsatisfied basic human needs.

Modifying federal and California state drug policies, improving circumstances in the external environment, increasing the capacity of school drug prevention programs, helping students be optimistic and expand their personal power, and delving more extensively into the reasons that students do and do not use drugs are endeavors that will enable policymakers, program implementors, and students to reduce illegal drug use.

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