

The Challenge
- A Publication of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Vol. 13, No. 3 (Spring 2005)

Prevention Programs with Staying Power
What Makes Good Prevention Programs Take Hold and Last?

Indoor Air Quality for Schools
Creating a Healthy Environment for Students and Staff

Understanding the Lists of Effective Programs
Blueprints for Violence Prevention

Senate Confirms Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education

Funding Forecast
OSDFS Projects FY05 Grant Competitions

Student Drug Testing Update

Prevention Library
Resources for further information on youth drug use, violence, and creating safe and drug-free schools

Prevention Programs with Staying Power

*What Makes Good Prevention Programs
Take Hold and Last?*

Learn More

To learn more about the Child Development Project and how to build a Caring School Community, visit www.devstu.org or call (510) 533-0213.

With substantial federal, state, and local resources invested in schools in order to prevent violence and substance abuse among youth, it is important to have a sense that these investments “pay off.” However, research shows that all too often prevention programs that start off strong later lose their effectiveness or disappear altogether.

Exactly what makes the difference between lasting prevention programs that take hold in a school or community for the long term and those that lose their potency and fade away? Are there certain characteristics of effective programs that can ensure sustainability?

Achieving Culture Change at School

According to Dr. Eric Schaps, president of Developmental Studies Center, there are several key factors that can make a difference in effective prevention implementation and sustainability.

Dr. Schaps is the developer of the **Child Development Project**, a school improvement initiative that builds students’ reading comprehension skills and fosters caring connections between students, teachers, and parents. The project was recognized as both a model program by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and as a promising program by the U.S. Department of Education’s Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools.

The project includes a community-building component, the Caring School Community, that is focused on creating connectedness at school. The Caring School Community has four components: class meetings; cross-age buddies, a mentoring program; home activities for parents and children; and schoolwide activities such as family film

nights that bring families together.

Dr. Schaps noted that over the 20 years of developing and evaluating the program in hundreds of schools, he and his colleagues identified several factors that can mean the difference between successful and unsuccessful implementation.

“These principles are not specific to our program,” he explained. “They apply to almost any ambitious schoolwide effort aimed at changing the culture of a school.”

According to Dr. Schaps, the keys to culture change at a school are:

- **Principal leadership and support.** “You simply must have the support of the principal,” Dr. Schaps emphasized. “Teachers need ample professional development time and you need access to money, space, and equipment. The principal is the one to make those things happen. The principal also needs to actively participate in all staff development sessions. That sends a clear signal that the program is important and that school culture change is a priority.”
- **District office leadership and support.** School districts are increasingly determining priorities for their schools and deciding how staff development time and school budgets are to be used. Therefore, it is important that key district decision-makers find ways to support the adoption and institutionalization of any serious program. This includes district leaders signaling the importance of the program by allocating resources they control to it, and protecting the school from competing demands for change so that the principal and staff can properly attend to implementation issues.
- **Whole faculty involvement.** Change requires not only the investment of classroom teachers, but also the involvement of the lunchroom staff, playground aides, bus drivers, janitorial staff, and school secretaries. In order to build a cohesive school culture, all of the individuals who relate to students and families need to operate in synch.
- **Professional development that “walks the walk.”** “Teachers need a complete understanding of every aspect

“Therefore, when you are training teachers, you need to provide opportunities for them to experience the exact same elements of the program that their students will.”

- **Clear program implementation materials.** Schools require how-to manuals that clearly describe each program element and offer easy-to follow activities.

ED Supports Students' Lifelong Health, Wellness

Carol M. White Physical Education Program

Defining Overweight and Obesity

What's the Difference?

Although often used interchangeably, the terms overweight and obesity actually have two different meanings:

Overweight refers to increased body weight in relation to height, when compared to a medical standard of acceptable weight.

Obesity is defined as an excessively high amount of body fat in relation to lean body mass.

Body mass index (BMI), expressed as $\text{weight}/\text{height}^2$, is used to classify overweight and obesity among adults. Adults with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight, while adults with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese.

In children and teens, body mass index is used differently than it is for adults. Children's body

Many school districts recognize that their students need to increase their physical activity and improve their nutrition, but they lack the resources to help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to enjoy fit and healthy lives.

The U.S. Department of Education's Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) assists local educational agencies and community-based organizations by providing grants to initiate, expand, or improve their physical education (PE) programs.

Administered by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), the program supports high quality, research-based approaches to physical education, involving such efforts as teacher training, curriculum development, nutrition education, and fitness assessment.

This year, OSDFS awarded a total of 237 new PEP grants worth nearly \$69 million. While these new grantees are just getting started, others have been using PEP funds to improve their PE programs for the past few years. Across the country, school districts and organizations report that these funds have made a lifelong difference for the students involved.

Redwood Falls, Minnesota

In Minnesota, Independent School District #2897 created a wellness program to teach students to monitor their personal fitness and

fatness changes over the years as they grow. Also, girls and boys differ in their body fatness as they mature. Therefore, BMI for children is gender and age specific. Children with a BMI for age and sex at or above the 95th percentile are considered overweight.

Because they are still growing and developing, children are not referred to as obese. Children can be overweight or at risk of being overweight, while adults can be overweight, at risk of being overweight, or obese.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, "Overweight and Obesity," www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity.

align the program with state and national PE standards.

Using PEP grant funds, the district purchased new technology to help students develop their own personal fitness plans. The technology included TriFIT hardware and software, hand-held computers for PE instructors, heart monitors, and pedometers.

Students in grades 4-10 were taught how to track their fitness progress by collecting data from their pedometers and heart rate monitors and entering it into personal Health Risk Appraisals. Rather than compete against each other, the students learned to improve and maintain their own personal fitness levels.

Middle school PE teacher Polly Bowen, who oversaw the program, observed that parents were particularly pleased with the fitness reports they received at home. "The response was wonderful," she said. "Parents would call us and say, 'This helps us understand what we should be doing, not only for our children, but also for ourselves.'"

The district also purchased fun and challenging new equipment, including cross country skis and an indoor climbing wall.

According to Bowen, the skis in particular were a great hit with the students, many of whom had never skied before. "At first the students were sliding everywhere, but by the next fall their improvement was tremendous. They could jump on their skis and go!"

As a result of the program:

- 75 percent of the middle school students reported that outside of PE class they engage in fitness activities at least three to five times per week, for at least 30 minutes.

- 53 percent of the middle school students reported that using the new technology helped them to better understand the importance of being physically fit.
- 53 percent of the middle school students reported that they think they have enough knowledge to implement a fitness plan five years later.

Understanding the Lists of Effective Programs

Blueprints for Violence Prevention



At least ten different lists of effective and promising interventions for drug and violence prevention have been sponsored by the federal government.

[Click here to learn about these lists.](#)

Over the past decade, the federal government has sponsored the creation of several different lists of research-based substance abuse and violence prevention programs that have proven to be effective.

As part of an ongoing series on effective prevention programs, The Challenge will take a closer look at the lists and help explain how programs are nominated and selected for inclusion. In this second installment of the series, we present information about the Blueprints for Violence Prevention program.

In 1996, the **Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)** at the University of Colorado at Boulder launched a national initiative to identify violence prevention programs that were proven to be effective. The project, called Blueprints for Violence Prevention, has identified 11 prevention and intervention programs that have met demanding scientific standards of evidence and have proven to be effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse. Another 21 programs are identified as promising programs.

Soon after the initiation of Blueprints, the **U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)** became an active supporter of the project and provided funding to CSPV to sponsor program replications in sites across the country. As a result, Blueprints has

evolved into a large-scale prevention initiative, providing training and technical assistance to help sites choose and implement effective programs with a high degree of integrity.

Identifying effective programs

Blueprints model programs all meet a strict scientific standard of program effectiveness. This determination of program effectiveness is based on the review and recommendation of a distinguished advisory board, comprised of seven experts in the field of violence prevention.

How do the programs come to the attention of this advisory board? According to Blueprints Project Director Sharon W. Mihalic, she and the CPSV team comb scientific literature for research articles on topics such as prevention, drug use, violence, and aggression. When they find evaluations of new programs, they give them a first-level review to determine if they meet basic criteria. They are then put before the advisory board, which meets twice per year. Occasionally program designers also send data and information about their programs, asking them to go before the board for review.

Senate Confirms Margaret Spellings as Secretary of Education

Learn More

To view Secretary Spellings' biography and remarks at her swearing-in ceremony, visit the **U.S. Department of Education Web site**.

In November, President Bush nominated Margaret Spellings to succeed Roderick R. Paige as secretary of education. The Senate confirmed Ms. Spellings as the eighth United States secretary of education in January. A trusted aide to President Bush, Secretary Spellings served during the first presidential term as assistant to the president on domestic policy, advising the president on issues such as health care, welfare reform, immigration, and job training. She previously served as Mr. Bush's chief education advisor when he was governor of Texas.

"Margaret Spellings has a special passion for this cause," President Bush stated during a ceremony in the White House's Roosevelt Room. "She believes that every child can learn, and that every school can succeed. And she knows the stakes are too high to tolerate failure."

Secretary Spellings, whom the president called an "energetic reformer," played a crucial behind-the-scenes role in the crafting of the No Child Left Behind Act, which the president signed into law in 2002.

Before working for Mr. Bush in Texas, Secretary Spellings served as government-relations director for the Texas Association of School Boards, clerk for the Texas House education committee, and adviser to former Gov. William P. Clements, Jr. She grew up in Houston and is a graduate of the University of Houston.

Funding Forecast

OSDFS Projects FY05 Grant Competitions

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) projects that competitions for nine discretionary grant programs will be held in fiscal year 2005.

Because funding priorities are based on congressional approval, this information is for advisory purposes only and is subject to change. This is not an official application notice of the U.S. Department of Education.

Based on initial projections, the following grant competitions are anticipated:

- Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses
- Demonstration Grants for Student Drug Testing
- Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plans Grant Competition
- Foundations for Learning Grants Program
- Grant Competition to Prevent High-Risk Drinking or Violent Behavior Among College Student
- Grants for the Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems
- Grants to Reduce Alcohol Abuse
- Grants to States to Improve Management of Drug and Violence Prevention Programs
- Safe Schools/Healthy Students

Discretionary Grants

Estimated funding amounts and numbers of grants to be awarded have not yet been announced.

OSDFS offers online technical assistance resources to assist potential applicants who are interested in applying for these discretionary grant funds. These technical assistance documents provide basic information on completing grant application forms, helpful grant writing tips, sample budget narratives, and suggestions for organizing a grant application. These technical assistance resources can be found at: **www.ed.gov/admins/grants/apply/techassist**.

For further information regarding any of the projected grant competitions, please contact OSDFS at (202) 260-3954 or visit **www.ed.gov/osdfs**. Updated grant forecasts also can be found at **www.ed.gov/fund**.



Safe School Facilities Resources

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities has launched a new Web page offering information addressing those aspects of school buildings and grounds that help ensure the physical security of students and teachers. This information is coordinated with the OSDFS. Visit

www.edfacilities.org/safeschools.

OJJDP Model Programs Guide

This is a user-friendly, online portal to scientifically tested and proven programs that address a range of juvenile justice issues. The recently expanded guide now profiles more than 175 prevention and intervention programs and helps communities identify those that best suit their needs. Users can search the Guide's database by program category, target population, risk and protective factors, effectiveness rating, and other parameters. Visit: **<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/programs/mpg.html>**.

Building Blocks for a Healthy Future

SAMHSA's Building Blocks for a Healthy Future Web site is designed to help children ages 3-6 learn to make positive, healthy choices. The "Grown-ups" section includes information about how adults can lay the early groundwork for talking about underage drinking, tobacco, and drugs. A kit of activities for adults and young children also is available. To order, call (800) 729-6686 or visit **www.bblocks.samhsa.gov**.

Too Smart to Start Initiative

HHS's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has launched a new program to keep preteens, ages 9-13, from drinking alcoholic beverages. A Too Smart to Start Community Action Kit is available for prevention professionals and groups who want to change their community's tolerance for underage drinking. Free technical assistance also is available. To order, visit **<http://store.health.org/catalog>**, or call (800) 729-6686 (inventory item TS001).