

**Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee:  
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**Currently as implemented, what are the strengths of the SDFSCA State Grants Program?**

- The State Grants portion of the SDFSCA program is the backbone of youth drug and violence prevention in the United States.
- The program serves more than 37 million youth in 97% of our nation's schools per year.
- The program provides effective services, including peer resistance and social skills training, student assistance, parent training and education about emerging drug trends.
- The program costs less than one dollar (78 cents) per month, per child served. Comparatively, drug, alcohol and tobacco use currently cost schools throughout the country an EXTRA \$41 billion per year in truancy, violence, disciplinary programs, school security and other expenses.<sup>1</sup>
- The program ensures that even LEAs with minimal funding have someone responsible for addressing the impact of alcohol, drugs and violence on the school learning climate.

**What are the elements of the State Grants Program that are working and addressing the needs of students and schools today?**

- The Principles of Effectiveness (POE) are being implemented in their entirety by LEAs, regardless of funding constraints, to meet locally identified needs.
- LEAs use SDFSCA funds to leverage other state, local and private funds to enhance the scale and scope of the programs they are able to deliver.
- LEAs are data driven and use school surveys to determine their community's needs and track progress over time.
- The SDFSCA program serves as the portal into schools for anti-drug coalitions and other community based prevention programs.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Education and SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. (2002). *Prevention Alert*. "Schools and Substance Abuse (I): It Costs \$41 Billion." 5(10). Available: <http://www.health.org/govpubs/prevalert/v5/5.aspx>.

**Is the SDFSCA State Grants Program working effectively to promote safe and drug-free schools across the country, specifically in rural, urban and suburban settings?**

- Yes! The program works effectively in rural, urban and suburban settings.
- By design, the program is data driven, links schools with community partners and is a catalyst for community involvement, volunteerism and the leveraging of funds from other sources to address drug and violence prevention and intervention.
- For example:
  - The Janesville School District, a rural school district in Wisconsin, uses Title IV funds: (1) to support an alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse (ATODA) coordinator; (2) to implement science-based prevention programs and curricula; and (3) to deliver staff development for LEA employees.
    - Results reveal:
      - A 50% decrease in students believing drinking is a good way to have fun and a 40% decrease in students who think it is okay to binge drink.
      - 100% of fourth grade students can identify that alcohol damages the brain, heart, and liver.
  - All LEAs within the Los Angeles Unified School District in California are using SDFSCA funds to implement science-based curricula to serve approximately 915,310 students.
  - The Lee County SDFSCA program, in suburban Florida, used its needs assessment to choose and implement three science-based prevention programs. Lee County's data driven approach has contributed to the following significant outcomes:
    - Past 30 day use of alcohol decreased by 16.3%, from 35.6% in 2002 to 29.8% in 2004.
    - Past 30 day use of marijuana decreased at a rate of 23.8%, from 15.1% in 2002 to 11.5% in 2004.
    - Past 30 day use of cigarettes decreased at a rate of 15.2%, from 12.5% in 2002 to 10.6% in 2004.
- SDFSCA money is being used effectively and can demonstrate measurable results:
  - In Wisconsin, the Stevens Point school district has utilized SDFSCA funds to develop a prevention and

intervention infrastructure for violence, mental health and addiction issues.

- For the past two years, the school district has used its Title IV funds to leverage a state grant to initiate a social norms campaign to challenge the perception that "everyone is using." The district has been able to achieve the following results between 2003 and 2005:
  - An increase in the number of students that do NOT drink or smoke.
  - A 4% decrease in the number of students reporting past 30 day use of alcohol.
  - A 5% decrease in the number of students reporting past 30 day use of marijuana.
- LEAs receiving a small amount of money develop consortia to pool their resources or raise additional funds. This allows them to provide effective programs and services based on local needs assessments and to monitor their progress over time.
  - Twenty-four school districts in Ohio received a total of \$751,874 in SDFSCA funds. By partnering with outside organizations and individuals (*e.g.*, United Way, local education councils, county prosecutor's offices and raising funds from parents, local medical centers, community groups, businesses, etc.) these school districts have leveraged an **ADDITIONAL \$686,680** to further the efforts of the SDFSCA program.
  - LEAs throughout the State of Washington also have leveraged substantial resources. For example, seven of the Educational Service Districts (ESDs) throughout the state receive a combined total of \$1,937,876 in SDFSCA funds. By committing local tax dollars and partnering with local community groups and businesses, these ESDs have leveraged an **ADDITIONAL \$986,215** to bolster the SDFSCA program in these ESDs.
- A recent study done in Ohio by Dr. Bonnie Hedrick determined that LEAs are in fact implementing all of the POE, regardless of the amount of SDFSCA funding they receive. Of the LEAs surveyed:
  - 86% had conducted a needs assessment as the basis of their programming.
  - 88% indicated they had monitored alcohol and other drug use through surveys and disciplinary referrals.

- 84% indicated that they use research-based programs.
- These examples are not anomalies; they represent what many LEAs throughout the country are accomplishing.

**What are the difficulties in determining the effectiveness of the program?**

- The State Grants portion of the SDFSCA program is data driven.
- States and LEAs use student surveys to develop their needs assessments, determine the most appropriate strategies to implement, and to track their progress and outcomes over time.
- Congress included data and information reporting requirements in the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act specifically intended to result in the development and implementation of a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS).
- The UMIRS was to be the basis for:
  - Data driven local and state decision making and evaluation under the POE; and
  - Reporting comparable information from the states to the Department of Education.
- The core data set required in Title IV for states to collect and report on includes: incidence and prevalence, age of onset, perception of health risk and perception of social disapproval of drugs and violence by youth in schools and communities. It is purposefully identical to the data sets collected in national surveys such as Monitoring the Future because this data is universally accepted for tracking youth drug use and attitudes over time, at every level from local to national.
- Any real efforts to determine the effectiveness of this program nationally must be:
  - Built from the LEA level up through the state and federal levels in a uniform manner; and
  - Capable of tying inputs (what is actually implemented with the funding) to outcomes (including the core data set).
- The DOE has not yet issued guidance on how states are supposed to build and implement the type of UMIRS system intended by Congress to fix issues associated with demonstrating the SDFSCA program's effectiveness.

**Are there mechanisms that could be proposed that would help determine if programs being supported with SDFSCA State Grants Program funds are effective in meeting program purposes?**

- Yes, the Uniform Management Information Reporting System should be implemented across all states to collect both input (what is being implemented) and outcome data from the LEA level in a consistent format with consistent data and information elements. LEAs and states

are already collecting data necessary to document input and outcomes of the program, but it is not currently required to be submitted to the DOE in a uniform manner.

- A uniform system to collect and aggregate information about what the SDFSCA program is accomplishing in terms of both implementation of the POE and how that relates to the core data set and other outcomes must be developed and adopted by all states and LEAs and collected by the DOE.

**Are there emerging issues facing students and schools today that the SDFSCA State Grant Program does not address and should they be addressed in the SDFSCA State Grants Program?**

- As currently implemented, there are already too many mandates on the program. It should not be diluted any further. No new issues and mandates should be added.
- The program already allows enough flexibility to address emerging drug, alcohol and violence issues.
  - For example:
    - The State Grants portion of the SDFSCA program is dealing effectively with the growing meth crisis through both the 20% Governor's set aside and the LEA portion of the program.
    - Many states experiencing severe meth problems are using funds from their Governor's set asides to set up meth task forces at the state and community levels.
    - Many schools have incorporated specific meth education components into existing evidence-based programs when meth is identified as an issue through school surveys.

**Is the structure of the SDFSCA State Grants Program (awarding funds to the State Education Agency and the Governor), the most effective mechanism for the use of these funds?**

- Yes because every LEA needs funding to provide all of America's school aged youth with programs and services dealing with drugs, alcohol and violence.
- If the structure were changed from a formula based program, many LEAs would totally lose focus on substance abuse and violence prevention and intervention.

- If states did not fund all LEAs within their boundaries, many schools would not receive SDFSCA funds and no thought would be given to preventing the negative impact alcohol, drugs and violence cause.
- The State Grants portion of the SDFSCA program should not become a competitive grants program because small LEAs without the resources to hire grant writers would receive no assistance.
- As previously demonstrated through examples in Ohio, Washington State and Wisconsin, small amounts of money do not indicate that an LEA program is ineffective.
- The leveraging of scarce SDFSCA resources to attract other local funding is exactly why LEAs that seem to have insufficient funds to implement effective, comprehensive programs are in fact able to do so across the nation.
- The Governor's set asides have been very effective in many states in enhancing local efforts to address alcohol, drug and violence issues as well as dealing with emerging drug trends such as meth.
- The Governor's set asides provide for natural partnerships to develop between local schools and their communities to address mutual substance abuse and violence concerns.
- The Governor's set asides also enable LEAs to leverage additional funds for the program. For example, in Washington State the Governor's portion grant of \$1.4 million enabled LEAs to leverage an additional \$1.7 million in state funds and nearly \$1.9 million in local match (cash and in-kind) during the 2004-2005 fiscal year.
- The 20% Governor's set asides should be maintained.

**Is the balance between flexibility and accountability contained in the statute working? Could State and local flexibility be balanced with additional core requirements that would encourage LEAs to address specific issues?**

- The issue with this program is accountability at the national level, not state and local flexibility.
- The DOE needs to provide uniform guidance to the states and LEAs concerning information and data collection to enhance the program's ability to show it is accountable to OMB and Congress.
- Although the DOE is trying to make a good faith effort to address the data and information collection requirements specifically included by Congress in Title IV of NCLB, its efforts to date have not been adequate to meet the requirements of the law.
- The Congressionally mandated requirements were specifically intended to result in the development and implementation of a Uniform Management Information and Reporting System across all of the states, which would be the basis for both:
  - Data driven local and state decision making and evaluation under the POE

- Reporting comparable information from the states to the DOE.
- There is a misconception that the State Grants portion of the SDFSCA program is not accountable and that the funds are not used to implement science-based programs. In fact, states and LEAs have taken the stringent requirements of the POE very seriously and are implementing best practices and science-based programs as well as monitoring their progress in reducing youth drug use through student surveys.

**How can the tension between the Principles of Effectiveness provisions that require that funds be spent on research-based activities and the broad list of authorized activities (many of which lack a strong research base) be resolved?**

- The POE were authorized as a complete process, to be implemented in their entirety. To ignore the POE as a process and evaluate only one component of it, such as whether or not science-based programs are being implemented, undermines the purpose of the POE.
- It is crucial to determine if implemented programs actually meet local needs and are reducing drug use and violence. It is the POE in their entirety that have made LEAs data driven. LEAs collect and analyze their local trend data to ensure their program implementation efforts are succeeding over time.
- We are very concerned with the DOE's focus on whether or not LEAs are implementing science-based programs rather than on whether or not they are implementing all of the elements of the POE as a complete process.

## **Attachment 1**

## **The Forgotten Link Drug and Alcohol Use and Academic Performance**

**In its FY 2007 budget request, the Administration recommended the elimination of the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) program. Eliminating the SDFSC program will leave millions of American children without any drug education.**

### **Student Drug Use and Academic Performance**

> Student substance use precedes, and is a risk factor for, academic problems, such as lower grades, absenteeism and high dropout rates.<sup>1</sup>

> Alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs can interfere with a student's ability to think, making learning and concentration more difficult and impeding academic performance. The more a student uses alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the lower his grade point average is likely to be and the more likely he is to drop out of school.<sup>2</sup>

> Poor performance in school has been associated with marijuana use, as youths with an average grade of D or below were more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year than youths with an average grade of A.<sup>3</sup>

> Adolescents who use alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.<sup>4</sup>

> Compared to non-drinkers, heavy and binge drinking students are more likely to say that their school work is poor and up to five times more likely to report skipping school.<sup>5</sup>

> According to recent research, 16% to 18% of teen drinkers have missed school or work because of alcohol use.<sup>6</sup>

### **Student Drug Use and Level of Schooling**

> Youth who initiate marijuana use by age 13 report less schooling than those who never use marijuana and those who begin using marijuana after age 13. Those who begin using marijuana before age 13 usually do not go to college, while those who have abstained from marijuana use, on average, complete almost three years of college.<sup>7</sup>

> Even if they decrease their usage later in life, those who begin using marijuana by age 13 are more likely to report lower income and lower level of schooling by age 29.<sup>8</sup>

### **Student Drug Use and High School Completion**

> Students who use marijuana before the age of 15 are three times more likely to have left school by age 16 and two times more likely to report frequent truancy.<sup>9</sup>

> Compared to their non-using peers, high school students who use alcohol or other drugs are up to five times more likely to drop out of school.<sup>10</sup>

## Peer Drug Use and Academic Performance

> Study findings link lower reading and math scores to peer substance abuse. On average, students whose peers avoided substance use had test scores (measured by the Washington state math and reading standards) that were 18 points higher for reading, and 45 points higher for math.<sup>11</sup>

**School based prevention programs, such as SDFSC, are imperative as they provide parents and American students with the information and skills necessary to remain drug and alcohol free, thereby enabling youth to focus on learning.**

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<sup>1</sup> Dewey, J.D. (1999). "Reviewing the relationship between school factors and substance use for elementary, middle, and high school students." *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 19(3), 177–225.

<sup>2</sup> Dewey, J.D. (1999) "Reviewing the relationship between school factors and substance use for elementary, middle, and high school students." *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 19(3), 177–225.; Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., & Bachman, J.G. (1998). *National survey results on drug use from the Monitoring the Future study, 1975–1997, Volume 1: Secondary school students*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

<sup>3</sup> Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). *SAMHSA's National Household Survey on Drug Abuse Report—Marijuana Use among Youths*. July 19, 2002. Available at [www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Brown, S.A., Tapert, S.F., Granholm, E., et al. (2000). "Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: Effects of protracted alcohol use." *Alcoholism: Clinical and experimental research*, 24(2).

<sup>5</sup> Greenblatt, J.C. (2000). *Patterns of alcohol use among adolescents and associations with emotional and behavioral problems*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies.

<sup>6</sup> Ellickson, P.L., McGuigan, K.A., Adams, V., Bell, R.M., & Hays, R.D. (1996). Teenagers and alcohol misuse in the United States: By any definition, it's a big problem. *Addiction*, 91(10), 1489–1503.

<sup>7</sup> Eisner, Robin. (2005). "Marijuana Abuse: Age of Initiation, Pleasure of Response Foreshadow Young Adult Outcomes." *National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Notes*. 19 (5).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Fergusson, D.M., Lynskey, M.T., & Horwood, L.J. (1996). "The short-term consequences of early onset cannabis use." *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 24(4), 499–512.

<sup>10</sup> Lane, J., Gerstein, D., Huang, L., & Wright, D., (1998) *Risk and protective factors for adolescent drug use: Findings from the 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*. [Online]. Available at [www.samhsa.gov/hhsurvey/hhsurvey.html](http://www.samhsa.gov/hhsurvey/hhsurvey.html);

Bray, J.W., Zarkin, G.A., Ringwalt, C., & Qi, J. (2000). "The relationship between marijuana initiation and dropping out of high school." *Health Economics*, 9(1), 9–18.

<sup>11</sup> Bence, M., Brandon, R., Lee, I., Tran, H. University of Washington. (2000). *Impact of peer substance use on middle school performance in Washington: Summary*. Washington Kids Count/University of WA: Seattle, WA. Available: [http://www.hspsc.org/wkc/special/pdf/peer\\_sub\\_091200.pdf](http://www.hspsc.org/wkc/special/pdf/peer_sub_091200.pdf).