Introduction to School Substance Abuse Policy
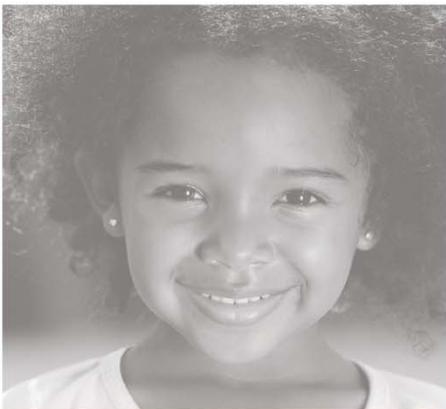
Online Course Content

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to School Substance Abuse Policy

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Prevention First is a nonprofit dedicated to preventing teen drug use before it starts. Since 1980, Prevention First has provided training, technical assistance and resource materials to thousands of schools, community groups, parents and youth.

We specialize in building the capacity of practitioners to develop strategic plans to address local substance abuse prevention needs, select and implement the best programs, curricula and strategies designed to promote social and emotional health and prevent substance abuse, and develop and implement media and communication campaigns designed to educate the public.

Prevention First is primarily funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services. Additional funding is provided by the Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Transportation, and through private foundations and individual donations.

Our Vision
Healthy communities that encourage drug-free youth.

Our Mission
To build community capacity to prevent substance abuse by providing training and technical assistance and raising public awareness.

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Overview

Description
This on-line training provides participants with an overview of school substance abuse policy. Participants will learn strategies for developing and implementing school policy, as well as tips for meeting Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Substance Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP) recommendations for policy adoption and/or enforcement.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- describe the effectiveness and benefits of school policy,
- explain the steps involved in developing, implementing and evaluating school policy,
- identify the SAPP Recommendations for Policy Adoption and/or Enforcement,
- identify the SAPP Guidelines for Comprehensive School Substance Abuse Policy,
- identify the components of a Policy Adoption/Change Plan, and
- identify the components of a Policy Implementation/ Enforcement Plan.

Audience
IDHS SAPP and PFS Providers implementing this strategy.

Completion Time
Estimated completion time is 2 hours.

Testing
Participants will complete a post-test on material learned in this course. Participants must pass the post-test with 80 percent accuracy in order to obtain credit for the course.

Introduction

A school's ATOD policy represents the framework for efforts in the school to address student alcohol and other drug use. It guides prevention efforts; establishes boundaries of application, expectations and normative values for student behavior; and details the school's procedures in handling incidents with consequences. It also outlines procedures for reporting incidents and suspected use, notifying parents, responding to drug-related emergencies, and coordinating with community agencies and the police.

Support and Ownership

For a policy to work, it must have community support and ownership. This means that participation and involvement from those affected by the policy-including students, parents, and school staff-is a critical part of the policy development process. Efforts by local health departments, substance use prevention and treatment specialists, as well as medical professionals and others in the community have also assisted schools in creating policies and procedures which are directed at building an environment that offers greater opportunities for student success while maintaining a safe and drug free school environment.

Positive School Climate

Policies are important tools used by schools to assist in establishing a positive school culture. Schools want to communicate to staff, students, families, and the community at large that the use, possession, and intent to supply illegal and unauthorized substances will not be tolerated. The policy, which is considered a legal document, serves as the primary vehicle for establishing alcohol and other drug normative values and behavior expectations for students, staff, and others. It also establishes how the school board will handle incidents and violations, which must then be followed in enforcing the policy.

Comprehensive Efforts

Prevention and education literature emphasize developing the school's alcohol and other drug policy as part of the school's comprehensive health, safety, and school climate efforts. The alcohol and other drug policy is typically one section of a school's overall policy and procedures. The policy guides administrators, staff members, families and community partners in understanding the school's role in helping adults and students create a safe and drug-free learning environment. Many school districts maintain one district alcohol and other drug policy that is intended to be applied consistently in each of the district's schools rather than encouraging individual schools to create individual policies.

Detailed Procedures

Detailed procedures and protocols should be developed for administrators and staff regarding how incidents, including medical emergencies and episodes of violence, will be handled by the school. Detailed graduated sanctions should also be included in the procedures and protocols as well as the district's expectations for district personnel and volunteers in addressing alcohol and other drug policy issues. Information is typically included on how to identify policy violators, how to report violations, how to handle evidence, and what to avoid in implementing the alcohol and other drug policy.

Types of Policies

Comprehensive Policy of Record
The comprehensive school policy covers all students, visitors, and adults under the policy as well as all policy boundaries, types of incidents and consequences. This is the most common type of alcohol and other drug policy utilized in schools.

Extra-curricular and Co-curricular Alcohol and Other Drug Policies
Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are those related to and in addition to the regularly scheduled school curriculum. Co-curricular is in addition to regularly scheduled school curriculum offerings, is given a grade and can earn credit toward graduation, such as school-sponsored field trips, classes at a vocational school, and internships. Extra-curricular does not earn a grade, and does not offer credit toward graduation such as clubs, intramural sports and events, and extra-mural sports and events. This type of policy does not supersede the comprehensive policy; students choosing to participate in extra or co-curricular offerings are subject to both the comprehensive policy and the co-curricular policy. Not all schools have extra or co-curricular policies, especially if their comprehensive policies cover all areas and incidents that may be covered under any additional policies.

Student Drug Testing
A student drug testing policy is an addition to the comprehensive school policy, and is specific to randomized drug testing procedures and consequences in the school. A drug test does not measure impairment, but rather detects whether a substance or its metabolite is present in the body. This type of policy applies to all students defined in the testing pool which should be specified in the policy. Constitutional law does not currently permit random testing of all students attending school. Under this policy, a student may test positive, yet not have violated the comprehensive school policy for possession, distribution, or being under the influence. He or she would be subject to consequences listed in the drug testing policy, and thus may be exempt from consequences listed in the comprehensive policy.

Zero Tolerance
Zero Tolerance policies have been a popular, yet highly scrutinized, approach for schools looking for fast-acting solutions that send a clear message that substance use is unacceptable. Zero Tolerance policies prescribe harsh consequences such as automatic suspension or expulsion regardless of the individual student or the circumstances of the violation. Fortunately, many schools have come to understand that substance use problems are better addressed by helping students rather than simply removing the student from school. Collaborative efforts with local health departments, substance use prevention and treatment specialists and medical professionals offer opportunities for student success while maintaining a safe and drug-free school environment.

Benefits

An effective school substance abuse policy has many benefits:

- Policies influence the social environment of the school by playing a crucial role in setting behavioral norms and establishing guidelines for student behavior control (Oxford Journal, 2004).
- A districtwide policy helps maintain consistency in prevention and intervention efforts and promotes fair, uniform treatment of students at different schools. It guides the development of site-specific procedures and ensures program continuity if a key building administrator should depart (ERIC).
- Clear rules and consequences at school serve as protective factors for substance abuse prevention (Journal of Primary Prevention, 2003).
- When a school is prepared to help parents deal with adolescent substance use concerns in a confidential, systemized process, the school's efforts can increase parent cooperation, assist the student and family in accessing the most appropriate services, and strengthen the chances that the student can remain in school and achieve greater educational outcomes. (Prevention First, 2009).

Evidence of Effectiveness

Alcohol and drug use among adolescents is one of the most detrimental risk behaviors affecting academic achievement, school bonding, and student health and safety. Effectively written and consistently enforced school alcohol and other drug policies have been shown to have a positive effect in reducing and preventing substance use (New Hampshire, 2013).

School Environment

Policies influence the social environment of the school by playing a crucial role in setting behavioral norms and establishing guidelines for student behavior control (Oxford Journal, 2004). The majority of teachers (79.4 percent), parents (65.5 percent) and high school students (66.0 percent) think that their school's policies (rules and consequences) about student smoking, drinking or using other drugs are very or somewhat effective in preventing students from engaging in substance use at school or during school hours (CASA).

Consistent Enforcement

School policies regarding substance use need to be consistently enforced to be effective. In fact, research shows that when it comes to deterrence, youth certainty of being caught is far more important than the nature of the punishment itself (Maine, 2011). For example, one study found that, among middle and high school students, higher perceived levels of enforcement of school anti-smoking policies were related to lower rates of smoking (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2011). Furthermore, referring students to assessment and intervention or treatment, rather than just punishing them, has been shown to have positive results.

Critical Components

Policy change is most effective when schools do the following:

- Provide a rationale for the policy that clearly describes what the school hopes to achieve by implementing the policy.
- Include a clear, positive statement about student and staff behavior.
- Include provisions for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation or treatment.
- Coordinate school policies with community policies.
- Include clear consequences for infractions and compliance.
- Include rewards and recognition for those who behave appropriately.
- Communicate policy information to students, faculty, parents, and the community. Students and parents should receive written information that clearly outlines their rights and responsibilities.
- Explain the rationale for the policy to faculty and staff.
- Train faculty and staff to implement the policy.

National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention (Hawkins, Catalano, and Associates, 1992)

SAPP Recommendations for Policy Adoption and/or Enforcement

NOTE: There are no SAPP Standards or Outputs for this strategy. The SAPP Recommendations for this strategy should serve as a guide for planning and implementation, but providers will not be evaluated/rated on these recommendations.

Planning for Policy/Ordinance Adoption or Change

1. Research the process of local/school policy adoption or change.

2. Review the SAPP Policy Guidelines for information about what the policy should optimally include.

3. Develop a Policy Adoption/Change Plan to prepare for the adoption of a new or revised policy, including:
   a) A description of how the proposed policy will address the problem and the factors that contribute to it.
   b) The target audience(s)/key stakeholders influential in and/or responsible for adopting the policy and potential enforcement.
   c) Strategies for educating key stakeholders about the proposed policy solution (including resources required, persons responsible and timelines).

Planning for Enforcement of an Existing Policy

4. Develop a Policy Implementation/Enforcement Plan once the policy is adopted. The plan might include the following (if not already evident/addressed):
   a) Strategies to secure the support of the individuals/agencies responsible for leading enforcement efforts
   b) Strategies to secure the support of adjudicators/prosecutors
   c) Development of a process to ensure enforcement efforts are targeted to locations and time of day/year based on data
   d) Development of a subcontract that indicates enforcement agencies have agreed to supply enforcement data with the coalition/provider
   e) Identification of clear sanctions and strategies to ensure sanctions are routinely administered
   f) Strategies for notifying the target audience (i.e. community, liquor license holders, etc.) at least once per year that enforcement efforts will be conducted, and the consequences of being out of compliance
   g) Strategies to notify the community about the enforcement results – at least once per fiscal year.

SAPP Recommendation #1

Research the process of local/school policy adoption or change.

There are many good reasons for schools to create and enforce a comprehensive school substance abuse policy. Some schools may already have such a policy in place, and will only require some updating. Other schools may have policies which would benefit from a few revisions, while others may need significant changes. Given the challenges in maintaining a drug-free school, it's important to review and revise the school policy on an ongoing basis (Maine Office of Substance Abuse, 2009).

There are a variety of reasons a provider, school or community may engage in school policy development and/or enforcement. Perhaps the school is new and there is no existing policy. Perhaps data has uncovered a new problem or a rise in use and violations that can be addressed by revising an existing policy. Or perhaps there is an existing policy, but maybe it has not been reviewed for ages, it's not effective, or it contains loopholes. Finally, in some cases, a strong policy is on the books but it's not being consistently enforced.

Before engaging in policy work, you must find out the process for getting a policy adopted or changed. Talk to the school or district to determine whether or not there is an existing policy, and to learn about the process of policy adoption. Existing policies can often be found in the student handbook, employee handbook, central board of education office, or parent orientation packets.

Policy Development Process

The process of developing, implementing and evaluating an effective school alcohol and other drug policy is grounded in a series of steps recommended in literature. These steps involve representatives from the school and community coming together in a work group for the purpose of creating, communicating, implementing, enforcing, and evaluating the policy's effectiveness. The process can be complex, time-consuming, and sometimes tedious and emotionally draining. Districts allow from nine months to a year for completion.

Step 1: Work Group Formation
The first step in creating or revising the school's alcohol and other drug policy is to create a work group charged with working alongside administrators in the development, presentation, implementation, enforcement and review processes.

Step 2: Needs Assessment
The work group's efforts begin with taking a data-driven approach to understanding student use and attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs, as well as taking a look at violations and consequences in previous years. The work group will initiate a needs assessment process using archival data, local alcohol, tobacco, and other drug youth survey information, and representative input from groups that will be impacted by the policy including administration, staff, students, families and community organizations.

Step 3: Policy Formulation
The work group will then formulate a formal school policy document that defines terms used in the policy, includes who is covered by the policy, the geographic boundaries and time periods for which the policy is in effect, and the procedures for handling violations. Upon completion of the writing phase for the policy, the work group will present the policy for review and feedback to administration, district legal counsel, staff, students, parents, and community members. The work group will revise the policy and procedures based upon feedback.

Step 4: Policy Adoption
Once revisions and feedback are incorporated, the work group or its representative (administrators) will present the policy and procedures to the district board of education for approval.

Step 5: Communication
Communication about the newly approved policy and procedures must be directed to staff, students, families and community members. This includes filing a policy of record with the school board, publicizing the policy and placing copies in locally accessible areas.

Step 6: Policy Enforcement

According to research, school policies regarding substance use need to be consistently enforced to be effective. Policy implementation will ensure that those charged with implementing the policy are trained to support the policy and follow established protocols and enforcement procedures.

Step 7: Evaluation

The culminating task of the work group is evaluation and review. The evaluation includes collecting and reviewing data from at least one full year of implementation to determine outcomes as well as any unintended potential problems created by the policy. The work group typically conducts a full policy review at least every two years.

STEP 1: Work Group Formation

Schools alone can't defeat a problem as complex and socially deep-rooted as substance abuse. The whole-hearted support of parents, staff, and community is critical to success. Thus involving all parties in policy development is an "essential investment of time and energy" (ERIC, 1993). The first step in creating or revising the school's alcohol and other drug policy is to create a work group committed to each step of the process.

Work Group Role

Some school districts have a standing alcohol and other drug policy subcommittee that is responsible for all aspects of policy development. When an issue arises in the school district concerning the policy, the subcommittee may be called into action to defend or review the policy and procedures. Other districts create a policy work group whose main goal is to produce the final recommended version of the policy. The work group may also be involved in periodic data collection and/or policy review, but are not involved in policy defense. An incident requiring review or defense is typically handled by district personnel.

Member Responsibilities

The work group will not only develop the content for the new policy, it will also be involved in each step of communicating, seeking approval, planning implementation and enforcement strategies, and evaluating the policy. Potential work group members should be given information about the purpose of the work group, a description of the work to be done, and information about the commitment that will be expected of members prior to the first meeting. Potential work group members can be invited to an informational meeting describing the elements of the work group and process, and be given the opportunity to commit to the work or decline participation.

Work Group Structure

The policy work group may be composed of 12 to 20 members representing diverse groups including community interests and the school district.

School Representatives

School administration representation is essential on the work group. Other school representatives that will be especially helpful should include:

- A school nurse
- A Student Assistance coordinator or counselor
- A guidance counselor or social worker
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Students
- Parents of students

Community Representatives

Community representatives that will be especially helpful include:

- Substance use prevention and treatment providers
- Faith community representatives
- Youth-serving organizations
- Local law enforcement
- An attorney familiar with school law
- A public health department representative
- A college or university instructor familiar with school codes, adolescent health and developmental stages
- A current or former school board member
- Local business owners that connect with youth (e.g. recreational facility or restaurant)

Tips for Working with Schools

Community-school partnerships bring together a broad range of perspectives and expertise from inside the school as well as from organizations and individuals within the community. These partnerships are better able to connect, coordinate, and leverage resources from a variety of sources to support students and families.

Building this partnership requires commitment and an understanding of how schools operate. Understand that change processes with schools are often slow, and be prepared to accept that.

Get to Know the Stakeholders

- Most administrators are knowledgeable about the school's policy and have received some training about what elements are contained in an effective alcohol and other drug policy, so they are a good place to start.
- If you are unable to set a meeting with an administrator, check to see if the school has a Student Assistance coordinator or team, and ask for a meeting. A guidance counselor or social worker would be the next appropriate person with which to meet if no SAP exists in the building. (For more information about Student Assistance, see: https://www.prevention.org/Resources/documents/OnepageSAPDescription.pdf).
- When contacting the school to ask for an appointment, give a specific amount of time you would like for the meeting. Keep it brief - under 30 minutes for the first meeting.

Be Informed

- Be informed about the school prior to contacting someone about policy issues. Learn about the school's students, academic record, current policies, prevention programs and intervention services. Visit the Illinois State Board of Education web site to view the school's School Report Card (http://illinoisreportcard.com) to acquire some of this data, including expulsions and suspensions (www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/eoy_report.htm).
- Learn more about how the school previously developed their alcohol and other drug policy, and when the policy is scheduled for review. The policy is typically available on the school's website and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy are housed at the district's administration offices and are available for public viewing.
- Learn about the school district's priorities. Priorities change over time so be current. Identify how effective alcohol and other drug policies help school administrators meet their priorities.

Provide Information

- Be aware that most school personnel are not knowledgeable about alcohol and other drugs, the effects of these substances on the developing brain, and how these substances impact a student's ability to learn. Factual information about the impact of youth substance use will be a valuable contribution to the work being done.
- Bring information about alcohol and other drug use to life by informing school personnel about youth alcohol and other drug use in the community, and community strategies to address the problems.
- Bring agency brochures and information about services to meetings to help school personnel and community members understand the prevention and treatment resources available through your agency.

Build Relationships

- When you develop a relationship and partnership with a school, your continued commitment builds trust. Show up for all scheduled meetings and follow-up on all items you agree to do.
- Approach the relationship with the goal of helping the school and students succeed. Be positive in your communications with the school rather than trying to convey that the current policy is poorly written.

STEP 2: Needs Assessment

Assessing student use and attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs is a vital preliminary step; to be maximally effective, policy must be tailored to local needs. The work group will initiate a needs assessment process using archival data, local alcohol, tobacco, and other drug youth survey information, and representative input from groups that will be impacted by the policy.

Purpose

The needs assessment identifies current substance use trends, attitudes, problems, and new community prevention strategies which will be helpful in determining sections of the policy needing change. It is very helpful to understand what parts of the policy are violated most often, and when and where those violations occur. Understanding which types of consequences are most often administered to whom, and what community services are available for students identified as needing services will provide a broader perspective in developing the policy.

Survey Data

Local youth survey data can be gained from the Illinois Youth Survey or the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Both surveys offer information about youth substance use and attitudes toward use. When information is not available from either of these recognized sources, a local university may be helpful in creating a valid student and/or parent survey.

Archival Data - Community

Community data may include aggregate data from a local hospital emergency room regarding the types of substances used and numbers of youth with presenting alcohol and other drug symptoms. Local law enforcement officials may be able to add aggregate data about the types and numbers of offenses involving alcohol and other drugs, as well as general locations (private homes, local businesses, or open spaces) and when offenses are more likely to occur.

Archival Data – Policy Violations

- Number of violations by type of substance
- Number of students who have violated the policy more than once since beginning middle school
- Number of violations by racial ethnicity and gender
- Number of violations in all boundary areas covered by the policy (i.e. geographic, time of year, time of day etc.)

Archival Data – Consequences

- Types of consequences imposed by type and number of infractions, as well as by race and gender
- Number of suspensions and expulsions by ethnicity, gender and type of offense
- Number of students completing a substance use assessment as part of a reduction in consequences
- Number of students completing an educational/alternative to suspension program as part of a reduction in consequences
- Number of students completing a substance use treatment program as part of a reduction in consequences
- Number of parents informed of a violation
- Number of parents cooperating with an education or treatment program

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data can reveal concerns and problems with the existing policy that can't be identified through standardized surveys or archival data. Qualitative data may be gathered from youth and adult comments offered at a youth forum open to the community, as well as interviews with individuals affected by the policy. The work group might interview teachers, the school nurse, administrators, school counselors, coaches, bus drivers, youth-serving organizations, parents, and students.

Data Analysis

By reviewing and analyzing the data collected, the work group should be able to formulate a more effective policy which addresses the current environment and needs of the school community. The data should help answer:

- Are there loopholes, or sections of the current policy that aren't working effectively?
- Are certain behaviors, substances, etc. not covered in the current policy?
- Are consequences administered swiftly and fairly?
- Are those affected by the policy aware of it? Do they feel it's helpful or harmful?
- What resources are available within the school and community to help address the issue?

STEP 3: Policy Formulation

While there is currently not enough research available to prescribe a "model policy," critical, research-based components have been identified. Thus, each school substance abuse policy should be unique to each school/district, yet include the research-based components that make it effective. A comprehensive school alcohol and other drug policy typically includes the following:

Philosophy Statement
The philosophy statement focuses on the school's commitment to creating a safe and drug free learning environment. The philosophy statement includes the purpose for the policy and the goals the policy aims to accomplish.

Definitions
Terms such as use, misuse, drugs (including 'illegal' and 'misused legal'), paraphernalia, medicines, medical paraphernalia, volatile substances and medical emergencies are frequently addressed terms in the definition section of the school's alcohol and other drug policy. Definitions for possession, transfer, and distribution are also included.

Prohibitions
This section of the policy explains the who, what, where, when, and how of prohibited substances and actions. The prohibitions should include:

- To whom the rules apply
- The specific rules/expectations for behavior (most basic policies include drug paraphernalia and prohibition of clothing that displays any object or wording related to substance use)
- Where the policy applies/policy boundaries (e.g. school buildings, grounds, vehicles parked on school grounds, school-sponsored off-campus events etc.)
- The distinction between prescribed medications and abused medications

Consequences
The policy should outline a range of fair sanctions for being under the influence, possession, use, transfer and distribution of alcohol and other drugs. Both punitive measures and opportunities for getting help should be outlined.

Enforcement

The policy should describe procedures for:

- Searches including school property, personal property, personal search procedures, and canine searches;
- The school's response to student self-disclosure of use not in violation of school drug policies;
- The involvement of law enforcement;
- Notification/involvement of parents
- Implementation and maintenance of confidentiality procedures;
- Custody or control of prescription drugs and related equipment

(SAGE, 2009)

Sample Policy

This sample is intended to provide an example of content or language that might be included within the corresponding section of the policy. This is not intended to be a complete sample or model policy.

I.   PHILOSOPHY
    The board of education is committed to providing a safe and drug free learning environment for our students and staff, and recognizes that the use of alcohol and other drugs by any student seriously impedes that student's education and threatens the welfare of the entire school community.

II.   DEFINITIONS
    A.   Alcohol: The term alcohol shall be construed to refer to alcohol and alcohol–containing beverages. Alcohol may also include medicinal products such as mouthwash and cold medicine, which contain alcohol.
    B.   Alcohol or Other Drug-Related Activities: refers to the use, consumption, sale, distribution, transfer, promotion, and/or possession of alcohol or other drugs, alcohol or other drug paraphernalia such as items used to consume alcohol or other drugs, or alcohol or drug use promotion or marketing.
    C.   Drug paraphernalia: equipment or apparatus designed for, or used for the purpose of measuring, packaging, distributing or facilitating the use of drugs.

III.   PROHIBITIONS
    It shall be a violation of this policy for anyone to possess, sell, distribute or exchange; participate in a sale, distribution or exchange or attempt to sell, distribute or exchange any substance as defined above on school property (including on buses, at bus stops, or walking to or from school) or at any school sponsored activity, in the United States or foreign country. This also includes anything portrayed as a substance.

IV.   CONSEQUENCES
    Note: Violations and consequences are cumulative throughout a students' career

    A.   Purchase, Use, or Possession of a Substance Governed by this Policy; Being Under the Influence of It; Possession of a Reasonably Related Substance-Abuse Device; Participation in a Related Incident; or Refusal to Cooperate with an Investigation.

1. Consequences:
    a. Local law enforcement agencies will be notified
    b. While enrolled in High School, student's in violation of this policy shall be prevented from enrolling in or dropped from Driver's Education for one (1) semester

2. First Violation: All of the following will occur:
    – Suspension for up to a maximum of ten school days. The School Administration shall determine the length of suspension depending on the nature of the infraction and the student's cooperation once it is discovered
    – Before the student may return to school, he/she must provide proof of a scheduled appointment with the Student Support Team ("S.S.T."). The student's suspension will be continued until demonstration of the appointment is provided or ten school days is reached, whichever occurs first. If the student fails to provide demonstration of the above referenced option, the Administration, at its discretion, may refer the matter to the School Board for further disciplinary action.
    – Referral to the S.S.T. for screening and referral to treatment services if appropriate.
    – School personnel in consultation with the service provider student and parents/guardian will develop a re-entry plan. The student must demonstrate change to comply with the plan or the administration, at its discretion, may refer the matter to the School Board for further disciplinary action.
    – Athletic eligibility affected based on school procedures.

3. Second Violation: All of the following will occur in addition, based on school procedures above conditions

    – Suspension for ten school days
    – Referral to the S.A.P. for screening and referral to treatment services if appropriate.
    – School personnel in consultation with the student and parents/guardian will develop a re-entry plan. The student must demonstrate a good-faith effort to comply with the plan or the administration, at its discretion, may refer the matter to the School Board for further disciplinary action.
    – Athletic eligibility affected based on school procedures.

V.   ENFORCEMENT
    A.   Search and Seizure
       District policy provides for the school to handle any substance related incident until the student has been discharged to the parent, guardian, social service, medical worker, and/or law enforcement agency. A student may be searched, as their lockers are school property these too may be searched as well as their back -pack, car, and other bags brought to school.

(New Hampshire, 2013; Vermont Department of Education)

Quick Tips for Writing Policy

- The policy should contain clearly written text that will be easily understood by diverse audiences.
- The district's legal counsel should be involved in defining terms, boundaries and consequences covered in the policy.
- Some school alcohol and other drug policies include how the school plans to address prevention programming.
- The policy should comply with state requirements.

State Statutes

Neither the federal or state government mandates specific school ATOD policy/procedure language or inclusions, which leads to wide variation in content, implementation and enforcement of school policies. A number of Illinois statutes do, however, provide requirements related to how a policy is developed/enforced.

- 105 ILCS 5/10-20.14 requires the parent-teacher advisory committee, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, to develop policy guideline procedures to establish and maintain a reciprocal reporting system between the school district and local law enforcement agencies regarding criminal offenses committed by students.
- 105 ILCS 5/10-21.10 prohibits the use or possession of pocket pagers due to their connection with the possession, sale, delivery, and trafficking in drugs and other substances.
- 105 ILCS 5/10-21.4a requires "the principal to utilize resources of proper law enforcement agencies when the safety and welfare of students and teachers are threatened by illegal use of drugs and alcohol."
- 105 ILCS 5/10-22.10a allows school boards to adopt policies to authorize school officials to enlist the aid of local law enforcement to conduct reasonable searches of school grounds and lockers for illegal drugs.

(NASBE, 2014)

SAPP Recommendation #2

Review the SAPP Policy Guidelines for information about what the policy should optimally include.

The SAPP Guidelines for Comprehensive Substance Abuse School Policy indicate the components that are necessary for the effectiveness of the policy. Effort should be made to ensure all SAPP Policy Guidelines are reflected within the policy. However, while the provider may make every feasible effort to encourage the work group to include all the SAPP Policy Guidelines, the work group may choose to adapt only some of the guidelines. It is the provider's responsibility to document which guidelines are included in the policy and the manner in which they are reflected. Documentation should also indicate which guidelines were excluded, and why.

SAPP Guidelines for Comprehensive Substance Abuse School Policy

a. **Clearly defines populations to which the policy applies (students, staff, visitors)**

The policy should offer clarity about who is expected to adhere to the policy to reduce the likelihood of legal challenges and to empower those enforcing the policy to do their jobs effectively. Policies target students as the primary focus of expectations for behaviors that involve alcohol and other drugs. 'Students' typically includes not only students enrolled in the school, but also those not enrolled who are participating in a school-sponsored event (i.e., if the district's students are covered under a school sanctioned event or other policy boundary, non-district students are expected to adhere to the policy). The policy should also state when adults (e.g. parents, family members, community members) other than those employed by the district are subject to the policy expectations. Since adult substance use may also infringe on the safe environment of the school or at school events, the school has the right to expect adults who enter the school to be substance-free.

b. **Clearly defines where the policy applies (school building, grounds, vehicles on grounds, school-sponsored off-campus events such as athletic events and field trips)**

The policy boundaries establish the school's jurisdiction over substances in relationship to students, staff, and others. Policy boundaries clearly explain where and when the policy is in effect. The policy should apply in any situation, regardless of location, where the school is perceived as endorsing, sanctioning or otherwise supporting the activity or event. Therefore, policies are not restricted to school grounds but can include bus stops, walking paths to school, vehicles transporting students, places where school and athletic groups travel, etc. A boundary may also include summer activities such as camps which are not sponsored by the school, but constitute an extension of the school when the student attends as a representative of the school. Extracurricular policies should state the time period covered by the contract. The time period may be as short as the season, such as an athletic season, or as long as the calendar year.

c. **Clearly defines what substances are prohibited and what constitutes "use" and/or "possession"**

An effective policy defines what substances and activities are covered under the policy along with any conditions that apply to those substances. Policies will usually include what it means to distribute, attempt to distribute, purchase and sell prohibited substances in addition to what constitutes use and possession of the identified/defined substances. In addition to prohibiting alcohol, tobacco and other specific drugs or abuse, the policy might also cover illicit drugs, controlled substances, counterfeit drugs (a substance that is directly or indirectly represented to be a drug of abuse, whether by communication, marking, labeling, packaging, distribution, or similarity in shape, size, color or price), drug paraphernalia, prescription drugs, and over-the-counter medication. A student's prescription medication is not considered a prohibited substance. School policies often require students to take the medication to the school nurse for registration and/or storage.

d. **Communication of the policy to all affected populations (e.g. students, staff, visitors, parents) on a regular basis –at minimum annually**

Planned information dissemination through a variety of channels to students, parents, and staff creates stronger preventive opportunities. ERIC Digest suggests that administrators regard policy as a product to be marketed and urge them to be persistent and creative in their efforts. For example, sponsor school information booths at shopping centers, ask employers to distribute information via employee newsletters, and/or ask owners of stores that sell alcohol and tobacco, especially those near schools, to ensure their employees obey laws against selling to minors.

e. **Schedule for periodic review of the policy (at least every two years)**

Describe the timetable and procedures for review of the policy. Include who should be involved in the review process, including key stakeholders. By determining this in advance, and including this information in the policy, the review is less likely to be overlooked. The review should evaluate how the policy is or is not working.

f.   Clearly stated consequences of first and subsequent policy violations that include opportunities for intervention and/or treatment as alternatives to suspension/expulsion

The policy should state which disciplinary sanctions will be imposed for which violations and describe the specific steps that will be taken depending on the level of offense. For example, possession and use may be handled differently than distribution and sale. Also, sanctions may vary based on the age of the offender and/or the number of times a student has violated the policy. An abeyance option may also be included, which spells out the consequence and conditions necessary for re-entry into school when suspension or expulsion is involved. An effective policy offers opportunities for intervention allowing students to get the help they need and stay in school to continue their educational opportunity. The policy should outline the types of intervention services the school will provide (i.e. substance abuse assessment by a school counselor or nurse, screening for further evaluation etc.) and the conditions that must be met in order to waive the suspension/expulsion.

g.   When implementing intervention as a consequence of policy violation, ensure the following:

a.   Substance abuse assessments are completed by someone with training to implement an assessment

While schools cannot dictate where a student must receive an assessment, they can specify acceptable conditions for an assessment and compliance with the recommendations.

b.   Confidentiality is ensured for those who are assessed and participate in substance abuse interventions

The policy should specify how communication is to be handled internally and with external service providers to ensure confidentiality regulations are followed.

c.   One-to-one counseling is provided rather than group counseling if education rather than treatment is the intervention goal

Group programs may increase the problem behavior by creating stigmas and bonding with others similarly labeled. One-on-one sessions based on brief intervention and motivational interviewing are successful for students not needing treatment.

h.   Incorporates provisions for prevention, intervention, treatment and relapse prevention

This approach helps ensure that the school is making every effort to prevent problems before they occur and provide those who need help access to appropriate services. Some schools choose to utilize school personnel to provide basic substance use services such as assessment and educational programs. Student Assistance coordinators or counselors often are trained and certified to assess substance use and provide basic services such as educational programs, brief interventions, and relapse prevention services. Student Assistance Programs typically do not provide outpatient treatment services at school. Schools may develop working relationships with local mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals to provide services to students/families. While these services can be offered to students and families, they have the right to deny services or seek services wherever they wish. The policy should specify what requirements and documentation are necessary to comply with terms for an alternative to suspension/expulsion option.

Consequences

It is especially important that those responsible for enforcing the rules believe that the consequences are appropriate for both age and offense. In fact, research conducted with police officers has found that they are more likely to enforce underage drinking laws if they believe the consequences will be consistent, predictable, not overly harsh, and appropriate to the offense. Thus, the school policy workgroup should ensure that the consequences developed for violations are appropriate, according to these guidelines:

- Based on research whenever possible
- Consistent, predictable, non-discriminatory, and reasonable
- Reviewed, known, and understood by all stakeholders
- Appropriate to the:
    - type/level of offense
    - age/development of offender
    - circumstances of the incident/substance used
    - the school's available resources
- Enforceable
- Not overly harsh
- Do not result in stigmas or "labeling" the student as a troublemaker or substance abuser, which can result in the student internalizing that identity

Quick Tips for Developing Consequences

- Involve parents/guardians and the student when choosing the consequence or intervention
- Whenever possible and appropriate, use loss of privileges that do not restrict educational opportunities
- Use out-of-school suspension and expulsion only when necessary
- Offer community service as a consequence
- Ask the student to write a personal goal statement, including how substance abuse might interfere with those goals
- Partner with law enforcement when determining consequences
- Provide referrals for evaluation, counseling, and/or treatment
- In athletic or co-curricular settings, consider using loss of privileges that do not result in complete expulsion from the group or team (e.g. allow the student to continue to practice, but not play X number of games)

(Maine Office of Substance Abuse, 2009)

Intervention

Although restrictions of privileges and class attendance are the most common form of disciplinary action, these restrictions should be used judiciously. Exclusion has been found to place especially at-risk students at even higher risk. Schools should exercise particular caution in the restriction of privileges for younger students as they are in critical developmental stages both in terms of vulnerability to peer pressure and malleability of behavior patterns (positive and negative). Consideration should also be given to other factors that may have contributed to the policy violation, such as family stress, bullying, academic failure, or problems with peers (New Hampshire, 2013).

Do What Works
Suspending and expelling students with substance use violations has the potential of "adding lack of involvement in school and school failure to the list of risk factors experienced by these students" (Oxford, 2004). Also, harsh penalties and penalties that are not equally administered may actually promote further at-risk behavior. Referring students to assessment and intervention or treatment, rather than just punishing them, has been shown to have positive results. Thus, effective policies outline not only consequences, but also options for intervention and avenues for treatment, if necessary, to encourage changes in behavior. The school/district should either provide student and staff assistance programs or refer offenders to outside agencies.

Develop Procedures
The policy often does not specifically state the conditions for intervention and compliance necessary to remain in school or for re-entrance to school. Instead, these conditions are written into outlined procedures to be followed when a violation occurs. Students who have violated the policy along with the student's parents or guardian are given an information sheet with conditions specific to the violation. The procedures should be clear and specific about what options are considered appropriate and under what conditions various options may be applied. This specificity allows those in the position of assigning consequences flexibility, yet the ability to apply consequences equally for like offenses.

Recommendations

The Youth Empowerment and Policy Project recommends the following:

- Write procedures into policy that support rather than simply punish students who are willing to accept help for drug and alcohol related problems.
- Hold awareness meetings to inform students of treatment options.
- Provide a drug counselor in the school.
- Develop or refine a system of referral so that a student can inform the appropriate people that a friend may need help without fear of persecution.

(Maine Office of Substance Abuse, 2009)

Review and Feedback

Upon completion of the writing phase, the work group will present the policy for review and feedback to district and building administration, district legal counsel, staff, students, parents, and community members. The work group may offer public forums with the purpose of presenting the proposed policy and procedures and offering opportunities for dialogue and feedback. If the district's legal counsel has not been involved in the development process, the policy and procedures will need to be reviewed by those individuals. It is the district's legal counsels' responsibility to assure that all aspects of the policy and procedures are legally defensible.

SAPP Recommendation #3

Develop a Policy Adoption/ Change Plan to prepare for the adoption of a new or revised policy, including:

a. **A description of how the proposed policy will address the problem and the factors that contribute to it.**
When describing the rationale for the policy, be sure to describe how the new or revised policy will address the identified problem and therefore prevent or reduce student substance use and abuse and improve the school/community climate.

b. **The target audience(s)/key stakeholders influential in and/or responsible for adopting the policy and potential enforcement.**
In Illinois, the district's board of education is responsible for approving the district alcohol and other drug policy. The work group should make themselves apprised of how the board is structured and who makes up the membership. Key district administrators are typically the individuals responsible for presenting the policy to the board of education for approval. The work group will want to identify any administrators (beyond those in the work group) who will be instrumental in presenting the policy for the board and advocating its adoption. Additionally, the work group should identify other key stakeholders (e.g. students, teachers, parents, parent/teacher organization members, community prevention and treatment organizations etc.) who will be influential in helping board members to understand the value of policy changes.

c. Strategies for educating key stakeholders about the proposed policy solution (including resources required, persons responsible and timelines).

The work group will need to identify the strategies it will use to communicate the proposed policy to the target audiences (i.e. decision makers, administrators, stakeholders). While mass media can be highly effective when advocating for public policy, it may not be a primary method used to advocate for school policy. The following channels might be useful in communicating information about the proposed policy to decision makers:

- One-on-one/small group meetings to inform administrators and school board members of the policy prior to a formal proposal to the entire school board
- Informational brochures, fact sheets, summaries etc. to outline the key purpose of the policy and key policy components/changes
- Presentations to school administrators, school board members, student groups and/or community stakeholders

Messages and/or talking points should be tailored to each target audience (i.e. administrators; school board members etc.) in order to appeal to their specific interests and concerns. It will also be important to ground messages in good prevention principles. The National Institute on Drug Abuse prevention principles, evidence of the impact of substances on brain development, and risk and protective factor research may be particularly useful. Work group members should also anticipate questions and objections that may arise about the alcohol and other drug policy, and prepare sound responses to address counter arguments.

The workgroup should identify resources required to implement identified strategies, such as marketing materials, spokespersons, points of contact within media organizations, etc. The timeline should include all of the strategies and communication channels that will be used to educated stakeholders about the policy, who will implement each strategy and the target dates on which messages/materials will be released.

STEP 5: Communication

Communication about the newly approved policy must be directed to staff, students, families and community members. Ongoing communication is more effective than sporadic, one-shot policy messages for staff, students, parents, and other citizens (ERIC, 1993). Many schools are mindful of the prevention effect the policy and procedures may create, and want to be more proactive than simply providing access to the policy. Strategies may include discussing the policy in home rooms or core classes, and reminding students of the policy prior to events such as homecoming and prom.

Communication strategies might include (Maine Office of Substance Abuse, 2009):

- Develop and distribute marketing tools summarizing the policy
- Include the policy in student and faculty handbooks
- Review the policy at faculty/staff orientation and department meetings
- Distribute a copy of the policy to students and parents, annually
- Require that parents and students sign an agreement stating they have reviewed the policy
- Review the policy at all pre-season parent meetings for intramural and extramural activities
- Explain the policy to students in grade level assemblies and relevant class periods
- Put the policy on the school website
- Promote the policy prior to events such as homecoming and prom
- Host family forums to provide opportunity for discussion
- Provide the policy in all languages relevant to the school/community population

STEP 6: Policy Enforcement

According to research, school policies regarding substance use need to be consistently enforced to be effective in preventing and reducing youth substance use. Policy implementation will ensure that those charged with implementing the policy are trained to support the policy and follow established protocols and enforcement procedures.

SAPP Recommendation #4

Develop a Policy Implementation/Enforcement Plan once the policy is adopted. The plan might include the following (if not already evident/addressed):

a. **Strategies to secure the support of the individuals/agencies responsible for leading enforcement efforts**

   District and building administrators are usually responsible for leading enforcement efforts. Because the certainty of enforcement is an important preventive strategy, securing support of all administrators should be a priority for the work group. Administrators are more likely to enforce the policy when they understand the benefits of the policy on school climate and the overall health and well-being of all students and staff. The work group can build support for policy enforcement by sharing data and information with those who are charged with enforcing it and ensuring that enforcement procedures are clear and easy to follow.

b. **Strategies to secure the support of adjudicators/prosecutors**

   Ensuring that fair and stated consequences for violations are administered is a critical piece of enforcement. If students who violate the policy are commonly given a "pass," the policy will become ineffective. The work group must educate and secure support of all those who will be involved in administering and following through on consequences for policy violations. Offenses that violate both school policy and local, county, or state ordinances and laws will involve school leaders as well as those responsible for enforcement at the community level (e.g. local law enforcement, juvenile officers, the state's attorney, the county public defender, county probation and court services, etc.). The plan should include strategies for educating school and community representatives responsible for administering consequences about the impact of substance use on youth development along with the need for consistent application of consequences.

c. **Development of a process to ensure enforcement efforts are targeted to locations and time of day/year based on data**

   While enforcement of the policy should be ongoing, enforcement efforts may increase at (problematic) locations and times of day/year based on data from the needs assessment (e.g. school-sponsored trips, sports events, prom etc.).

d. **Development of a subcontract that indicates enforcement agencies have agreed to supply enforcement data with the coalition/provider**

Data collection and sharing is an important piece of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and identifying problems related to the implementation/enforcement of the policy. The plan should outline how and with whom data will be shared for the purposes of evaluation and decision making. Data sharing agreements between the school and the work group/provider details what data is to be collected and the frequency and manner in which it will be provided. Protocols would include who is responsible for reviewing individual incident data and assembling that data into aggregate form. Federally protected confidential information cannot be shared with individuals not covered in a signed release. The work group should consciously approach data reporting in a manner that will not violate both HIPPA health data and federally protected substance use service data.

e. **Identification of clear sanctions and strategies to ensure sanctions are routinely administered**

Currently, policy recommendations suggest that schools offer graduated consequences that match the severity of the offense while recommending common sense be used in applying consequences. These recommendations suggest discretion in determining consequences be based on previous behavior and repeated offenses as well as the severity of the offense. Challenges to this flexibility in discretion may occur in applying unequal sanctions, and in the perception that sanctions are applied unequally. The work group can monitor policy enforcement data to help address both misperceptions about policy enforcement and actual application of unequal policy enforcement.

f. Strategies for notifying the target audience (i.e. community, liquor license holders, etc.) at least once per year that enforcement efforts will be conducted, and the consequences of being out of compliance

Research data suggests that when youth believe they will be caught, and that sanctions will be applied quickly and fairly, they are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs. While many schools are reluctant to report substance use and violence data for fear they will be perceived as having a drug problem, not sharing data may impact the preventive nature of the policy. Thus, it is more imperative that aggregate data about the number and type of violations is shared within the school community, and does not necessarily need to be made public. The school should be very cautious not to publicize individual violation and sanction data to avoid potential negative labeling. The plan should outline how the data will be shared within the school community, such as with students, school district personnel, and the local parent teacher organization. The aggregate data may be shared via meetings, assemblies, school media (i.e. website, newspaper etc.) and through other appropriate means identified by the school or work group.

g. Strategies to notify the community about the enforcement results – at least once per fiscal year.

Communication about the newly approved policy must be directed to staff, students, families and community members. Ongoing communication is more effective than sporadic, one-shot policy messages for staff, students, parents, and other citizens (ERIC, 1993). Many schools are mindful of the prevention effect the policy and procedures may create, and want to be more proactive than simply providing access to the policy. Strategies may include discussing the policy in home rooms or core classes, and reminding students of the policy prior to events such as homecoming and prom.

Training

Policy enforcement will include training to ensure procedures are followed effectively. The predominant operatives involved in enforcement are district employees including all instructional and coaching staff, administrative, support and maintenance staff. Operatives may also include parent volunteers for activities and trips, bus drivers, lunch room personnel and playground supervisors, but may not require the same degree of training as other employees.

Purpose

Individuals charged with enforcing the policy require extensive training in order to maintain and ensure the policy and procedures produce the intended outcomes. Training includes how staff members should respond when identifying policy violations, as well as when students ask for help. In addition to learning each part of the policy, guided dialogue using sample cases can help administrators, counselors, and staff members understand the intent of each part of the policy. Administrators must also be mindful of policy training and support needs of new staff, substitute teachers, and volunteers.

Confidentiality

Training for staff should include both areas of confidentiality and sharing of information. Many staff members believe that having an interest in a student's welfare should allow access to a student's treatment progress or policy consequences. Training should include a clear description of 'need to know' regarding confidential information so that staff understand under what circumstances and what types of information may legally be shared.

Protocols

Common protocols for identifying policy violators require the following be reported to an administrator or designee:

- Personal observation of a student in possession of, using, or transferring a prohibited substance;
- Reliable source information that a student has possession, has used or has distributed a prohibited substance;
- Admission by a student that he/she possesses, has used or has distributed a prohibited substance;
- Display of symptoms or behaviors normally associated with use of alcohol or other drugs.

Content

Training should include indicators of symptoms or behaviors in order to reduce inappropriate identification. Operatives are often requested to report concerns about displaying indicators as 'health concerns' rather than trying to specify indicators as substance use. Training typically includes when and how information and concerns should be reported. Another important aspect of operative training is when, how, and by whom substances may be seized, and how the chain of evidence is to be handled when a substance is seized. Alcohol and other drugs are considered evidence in legal proceedings that may occur as a result of a policy violation. Specific protocols that are agreed upon jointly by school personnel and law enforcement must be followed as directed for a seized item to be considered in the proceedings.

Search and Seizure

Search and seizure policies and protocols may be written into the district's alcohol and other drug policies, or may be a policy segment dedicated to search and seizure of any item considered a threat to a safe learning environment. School administrators must follow state and local statues governing student and school searches which differ by community and state. Administrators may then look to case law as interpreted by the district's legal counsel to guide policy and protocol for school searches. Guiding factors in school and student searches are student's expectations of privacy, how those expectations are stated in the school's policy, and reasonable suspicion versus probable cause.

Search of Property

Overall random searches of property may be conducted as a preventive strategy, and do not need student consent. Random searches of students may not be conducted. Random property searches are considered as being conducted under reasonable suspicion when the district suspects an alcohol or other drug problem exists within the school. Data such as student surveys, student reports, and policy violations for substances are often used to identify and document that an alcohol or other drug problem exists. However, students and families must be advised in the policy that these searches can be expected, how the searches may be conducted, and where searches may be conducted.

Individual Searches

Individual student searches are conducted by consent, and are typically conducted upon reasonable suspicion. Students in school are protected by the Fourth Amendment, which is not superseded by school policy. Sound school policies will inform students and families about techniques that may be used in searches as well as the types of searches to which students may be subject. The policies should explain what happens to seized possessions, define consent searches and note how consent may be obtained. The policy should also include the consequences for failing to provide consent, state that lockers and other school property are provided for students' use, are under the school's control, and are subject to search at all times (ASCD, 2003).

STEP 7: Evaluation

A formal policy review process should be conducted every two years. Ethical considerations in youth service work direct that process evaluation be conducted in order to determine any potentially harmful effects not intended by the policy (Indiana EPC, 2000). The work group can be helpful in establishing criteria for monitoring implementation which will then be used to periodically evaluate the impact of policy components. Beginning in the first year of policy implementation, and every two years after, the work group should review criteria data to determine outcomes and any unintended potential problems created by the policy.

Guiding Questions

Several questions can be helpful in establishing the criteria:

- How many substance use policy offenses occurred during a given time period?
- Where did these offenses occur (e.g. school grounds, off campus events, on campus events, off campus parties, etc.)?
- What offenses are most commonly occurring?
- How many repeat offenses have occurred?
- What consequences are most commonly applied to offenses?
- What genders and ethnicities correlate with what sanctions?
- How many expulsions were administered?
- How many out of school suspensions occurred?
- How many in-school suspensions occurred?
- How many lost days of learning occurred?
- How many students were offered reduced consequences with compliance to recommendations for assessment, education, brief intervention, or treatment?
- How many students complied with recommendations for accessing help?
- How many students failed to comply with recommendations?
- How many students dropped out of school as a result of an alcohol and other drug policy violation?

Data Analysis

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse reports that consequences for policy violations are applied unequally; in particular, African American students are disproportionately represented among students disciplined at school. Thus, demographic data can help determine whether consequences are applied evenly across racial ethnicities and genders.

Additionally, researchers have found that suspending and expelling students with substance use violations has the potential of "adding lack of involvement in school and school failure to the list of risk factors experienced by these students" (Oxford, 2004). The number of lost days of instruction can indicate the degree to which this risk factor exists.

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