

Student Alcohol and Drug Use Interventions

For District Administrators

Meth Strike Force

Winter 2010

Partners on the Strike Force Education Committee:

Grossmont Union High School District

Institute for Public Strategies

Life Skills Training

San Diego County Office of Education

San Diego County Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board

San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency, Alcohol & Drug Services

San Diego Unified School District

San Diego County Probation Department



Student success & AOD use don't fit together

Many Possible Routes

A Shared Problem

Student experimentation and use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is a major contributing factor to underachievement, truancy and failure to graduate.

What can schools do to influence this behavior? Preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among students clearly cannot be solved by schools alone.

Parents and other community systems must step up to the plate; community-based prevention efforts are active in these areas.

As Early As Possible

Alcohol and drug use can lead to dependency or addiction, which is a problem that usually, only gets worse over time.

Sometimes intervention is needed for elementary school students – there may be early signs, or may be family issues that come to our attention.

Intervening at the earliest point possible is critical. First, less intensive outpatient or non-residential services may be sufficient for newly-developed use problems. Also, more intensive residential program capacity is just very limited in San Diego County for adolescents.

Consider Your Own System

Training

School staff – from administrators to teachers and others – need training to recognize early signs and know how to participate in the possible intervention routes. Training is available.

Collaboration

Consider ways you can leverage existing resources and systems to create better options for student health.

Policy

How is your district organized to share information? Is curriculum, staffing, training and policy to support intervention in place?

Why Are We Interested?

Gratefully most students don't use meth, but we know that preventing all substance use is a priority. We've seen the data. Treatment success rates are more than doubled when a youth starts treatment early.

This committee surveyed SARB and treatment providers last year, and discovered that both agree stronger connections are needed.

Board members, educators and parents are the conduits for prevention programs that offer students critical skills necessary to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol and drug problems

Risk & Protective Factors

Risk and protective factors can be predictors of alcohol and drug problems – especially when multiple factors are involved. Common factors include:

- Easy access to substances
- Home supervision & high expectations
- AOD use by parents
- Stable living situation

For More Information

Contact Strike Force Education Committee chair Jim Crittenden of the San Diego County Office of Education at 619.718-4998 or jimcritt@sdcoe.net.

Routes

Each “system” has unique pathways around identifying presenting problems and organizing help for families. Here are a few:

Education & Attendance

Student attendance is tracked – with ultimate accountability to the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB). With early recognition and good community linkages, clearly SARB is one opportunity to intervene in alcohol and drug use.

Probation & Delinquency

Student behavior may lead to misdemeanor or more serious crimes that come to the attention of Probation. In these cases, the Probation department has jurisdiction and the charge to help the young person and their family move forward through referrals to community programs, probation supervisor and other options.

Health Services & Alcohol /Drug Use

Recognizing the need for intervention with substance use can be tricky, but get help if you suspect a student needs more formal services in this area. Private programs are available to those with insurance coverage. For families with limited or no coverage, and limited ability to pay, the County of San Diego offers both non-residential and residential services that are regionally based throughout San Diego County. Call the Access Number (1-800-479-3339) for referrals close to where students live.

Why Now?

Resources are Limited

We have to work smarter, with fewer resources. Now is the time to catch things early.

Drug Use Patterns Are Changing

With a strong effort against methamphetamine, trends on problem indicators are slightly down. We want to prevent a simple shift to another substance.

Window of Opportunity

The rates of several indicators of consequences of meth use have been slightly reduced. In 2005, 21% of juvenile arrestees tested positive for meth. In 2008, the rate dropped to 10%. Now is the time to solidify these gains.

Support is Available

You can seek consultation in knitting together the kinds of services you need from the San Diego County Office of Education. Visit www.sdcoe.org for information on Student Support Services, SARB and other resources. See a detailed list of web-based resources about model programs and funding opportunities at www.no2meth.org. Look under the Community Resources tab, and then go to Education.

County of San Diego Methamphetamine Strike Force

Collaboration Since 1996

Supervisor Dianne Jacob convened the Strike Force to study the meth problem and recommend a specific course of action to the Board of Supervisors. Four strategies have been critical: Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Interdiction. Visit the Strike Force website at www.no2meth.org