

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) is prohibited by law from specifying which curricula program(s) a school district should/should not adopt. Further, USED has through regulation tied funding related to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program [SDFS] directly to programming. The SDFS Program presently requires, as a condition for funding that school districts: conduct an assessment of their programs; establish measurable goals and objectives; fund only programs which have been proven to be effective and periodically conduct an assessment of it's efforts to ensure they are effective. To assist schools in the identification of programs have proven to be effective [Principle #3], USED has established "a panel of appropriate qualified experts and practitioners" to evaluate educational programs and to recommend to the Secretary those programs that should be designated as promising or exemplary. This panel has been established under provisions found in the Education Research, Development, Dissemination and Improvement Act of 1994 [P.L. 103-227].

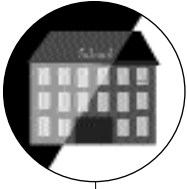
The 15-member panel, which was established in May 1998, is composed of educators, researchers, evaluators, program developers, and representatives of state and local education agencies, higher education, and from the medical and legal community.

Criteria for selection as either a promising or exemplary program were published in April 1999. 132 submissions were received by the closing date of May 28, 1999. After several panel meetings a small number of the submissions have been forwarded to the Secretary for his consideration as either exemplary or promising programs.

In addition to the process described above, USED has worked with the Education Development Center (EDC) to conduct a meta-analysis of school-based alcohol and drug-prevention programs. The meta-analysis has been completed and is in the process of being printed.

HISTORY

As USED requires SDFS funds to fund those efforts, which have proven to be successful/effective, results of the Expert Panel, will be shared with school districts around the country, as well as with our Middle School Coordinators. However, what specific information will be shared with school districts has not yet been agreed upon. Schools want more than a description of a particular program. They



want not only details about how the program operates, but also training and technical assistance. USED is beginning to develop a strategy to ensure that school districts obtain the information and assistance they need to implement these programs.

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are several issues that need to be addressed before we move forward. These issues include:

- Better understanding of how to measure success of a prevention program.
- Better understanding of how effective alcohol and drug prevention programs fit into a comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of youth.
- Finding staff, at all levels, that have understanding of prevention concepts and programs and how they can be incorporated into busy school day.
- Finding adequate funding to support the comprehensive prevention and early intervention strategies that are needed.