



E-Newsletter from Safe & Drug-Free Schools

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Collaboration links

- PACT Prevention Coalition
- EPIC Community Services
- National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Unit
- Sheriff's Office

Description of Programs links

Growing Healthy
A safe and drug-free schools proven program.

Stay on Track
An evidence-based program.

Stop Bullying Now!
Campaign
A national social marketing campaign.

The Party's Over
A community awareness campaign on underage drinking for high school students and parents.

Contact Me

Leslie Shugart
Safe & Drug-Free Schools
Schools, Student Services
shugarl@stjohns.k12.fl.us
Tel: 904-547-7574

Student Focus Group Summary

In an effort to engage our students in the planning and delivery of prevention programs in St. Johns County, I met with youth from three middle schools and one high school. The youth who participated in the focus group are members of the PACT Prevention Coalition Youth Group DDT21 (Don't Drink Til 21). Following is a summary of their viewpoints with regards to prevention efforts.

Currently, Safe and Drug-Free Schools delivers a comprehensive prevention program in 6th grade (Stay on Track). Students felt that it would be beneficial to have a comprehensive prevention program in 5th grade to prepare them for middle school. Students agreed that by 5th grade, tweens are at risk and curious about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. It was also agreed that elementary school is the time to teach peer pressure skills in order to prepare students for the transition to middle school.

The focus group felt that the prevention program should emphasize alcohol and marijuana as these are the substances that they believe are being abused the most at both the middle and high school levels.

Students agreed that the best method to deliver a comprehensive prevention program is to have a specialist come into the classroom to teach. The group felt that having the National Guard deliver this year's comprehensive program will be beneficial to students. They also believe that a health specialist or resource officer would be effective in delivering the program to students.

The program should have an interactive format – not just lecture. It should infuse role-play, group activities and up to date video clips. The group agreed that overall, a comprehensive prevention program does have an impact on students' attitudes about substance use and abuse. For the group, the most important factor is that information is being delivered in an up to date format that they can relate to.

When asked about assembly formats, students said "as long as it was relevant and interesting, we will remember it". Students in this focus group were still commenting on "The Chalk Guy" who came to our middle schools two years ago for a bullying prevention assembly using art, music, light show and stories to deliver his message. They commented that it did have an impact and helped them understand how bullying can hurt others.

When asked about bullying, students in the focus group said they do see bullying happening - mostly verbal bullying. They all agreed that bullying is a "big deal" on the school bus. They had all seen the posters on how to report bullying. The group determined that, for students, a text line to report bullying would work better than filling in a form.

Reporting and Investigating Bullying and Harassment Incidents

As required by Florida Statute, The Florida Department of Education will have each school district complete a form at the end of the year stating 1) total number of bullying and harassment incidents reported, 2) total number of incidents that after a complete investigation were determined to be bullying or harassment, and 3) total number of incidents that were not determined to be bullying or harassment.

Please ensure that your school is following the reporting and investigation procedures as outlined in our district policy. Any incidents that move to the administration level as follows must be investigated:

- A pattern of bullying or harassment has been established
- There is a referral by a teacher or staff member
- A formal complaint is filed
- An injury has occurred

This means that a Final Investigation Report Form must be completed on the incident. Every school has received a Bullying and Harassment Incidents Reporting and Investigation Manual. This manual contains reporting forms, steps for investigation, and the final report form.

Please let me know if you would like me to come out to your school and do a short review of the process with administrative staff to ensure that our district is in compliance with the policy and the Florida Statute.

Prevention Presentations

Safe and Drug-Free Schools can address any of your prevention efforts through the following presentations. Presentations are adjusted for elementary, middle, or high school:

For Parents

Parenting for Drug Prevention

This presentation will discuss how real the problem is by looking at data from our county, reasons why children use drugs, dangers to the teen brain, strategies and concrete ideas for talking with their child about how to stay drug-free.

Parenting to Prevent Bullying

This presentation will discuss the problem of bullying, social skills for all young people, if your child is being bullied, if your child is bullying others, and what a parent can do.

Middle School Success: What Parents Should Know (for 5th grade parents)

This presentation will discuss making the move to middle school, some concerns children have about going to middle school, how parents can help their child face the academic challenges ahead, the physical, mental and emotional changes happening to their child during this time, the role of friends, and how to build – and maintain – a strong relationship with their child.

For Students

Every elementary and middle school received Bullying Prevention Presentation Kits. I have a prepared presentation for high schools. If any schools would like additional bullying prevention presentations to students, please contact me.

If any schools would like a presentation on alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs for any specific grade level, please contact me.

For Staff

Presentation to staff that gives a snapshot of substance use in our county, what the current drug/risk taking trends are, and what educators can do.