APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

SDFSCA Methodology

Data Collection

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) reporting form packets for the 1999–2000 school year were sent by the U.S. Department of Education to Governors' SDFSCA program coordinators for all states, the District of Columbia, and four territories: American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. State educational agency (SEA) program coordinators were sent reporting forms as part of ED's Consolidated State Performance Report for State Formula Grant Programs. Besides each state and the District of Columbia, three territories were to complete the 1999–2000 SDFSCA SEA Performance Report: American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. SEA coordinators were instructed to forward their completed reporting form to the individual in their respective agency who was responsible for submitting ED's Consolidated State Performance Report.

Westat began receiving completed reporting forms from ED in October 2001. Upon receipt, each form was assigned an ID number. The IDs for the Governors' forms consisted of the prefix 10 followed by the appropriate two-digit Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) state code. SEA forms were assigned IDs consisting of the prefix 20 followed by the appropriate FIPS state code. Using these IDs, the status code for each form was entered into Westat's automated receipt control and monitoring system. This system tracked the progress of each reporting form during data collection and data preparation. Throughout the months of data collection, weekly status reports generated by the receipt control system were submitted to ED.

Data collection ended on February 28, 2002. Reporting forms for Governors' programs were submitted by 49 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories. SEA reporting forms were received from 49 states, the District of Columbia, and 2 territories.

Data Preparation

After being logged into receipt control, reporting forms were turned over to the coding/editing staff. Coders, using SDFSCA codebooks, manually coded each form. In addition, they checked for missing responses, verified sums of items for correct totals, verified sums of

percentages that should add to 100, checked items whose values were correlated with subsequent items (e.g., the number of LEAs providing a service could not be greater than the number of LEAs in the state or territory), and verified that skip patterns were followed correctly. All work was verified by another coder to assure accuracy and consistency.

If any items on the reporting forms were blank, inconsistent, or did not appear to correctly answer the question, the problems were documented on coding/data retrieval/problem sheets. These sheets, along with the appropriate reporting forms, were turned over to data retrieval staff who telephoned, faxed, or emailed program coordinators to resolve the problems.

The editing process also included checking items that were designated by ED as critical for analysis purposes. On the SEA form, these included Questions J-9, J-10, and J-13 through J-20. On the Governors' form, the critical items were Questions 2 through 6. If a program coordinator left any of these items blank, the data retrieval staff explained to the coordinator that these were critical items and asked him/her to provide correct data. If the coordinator indicated that these were missing data, staff suggested that action be initiated to assure that those data would be collected for the next reporting year.

If a state indicated a Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) had been conducted, but the prevalence data were missing, incomplete, or inconsistent, coders consulted the state's 1999 YRBS site report. If 1999 weighted or unweighted data were available, coders used these numbers to complete the pertinent questions on the reporting form. If neither prevalence data nor YRBS data were available for the state, data retrieval was necessary.

In addition, a Gun-Free Schools Act-SDFSCA performance data crosscheck was conducted. For each state, coders compared the number of weapons-related incidents reported on the SEA reporting form with the number of gun possessions reported on the Gun-Free report, for each school level. If the number reported on the SDFSCA report for a state was equal to or lower than the corresponding number reported by the state on its Gun-Free report, data retrieval staff called the program coordinator to rectify the error. This was done because the data reported on the SDFSCA reporting form must include all weapons-related incidents, while the number on the Gun-Free report is limited to incidents involving only guns.

After data inconsistencies were resolved with the program coordinator, a data entry operator keyed the reporting form. To verify that the data were keyed correctly, another data entry operator entered the data a second time. A machine-editing program was run to check for

inconsistencies. If the editing program found a problem, the data preparation supervisor checked the data to determine whether there was a coding or data entry error. All corrections resulting from these checks were made in the data file, after which the edit program was rerun to verify that all data inconsistencies had been resolved.

Responses to questions requiring explanation or specification and comments from program coordinators (i.e., nonnumeric responses) were keyed into a second data entry application and then verified visually using a printout of keyed responses.

Technical Notes for the Tables

In preparation for the production of tables, the data were reviewed for completeness within questions with subcategories and correlated items. It was determined that data from one item could not be reported in tables if data from a correlated item were missing. For example, in Table 2-3, if a state reported the number of elementary schools that received SDFSCA funding (Question J-6) but did report the number of elementary students (Question J-6.a), the number of elementary schools for that state was not included in the table on those data. For all other tables, data are presented for all question categories independently. For instance, Table 2-6 reports the sum of all states' responses to each category in question J-18. The tables show the number of states providing data in each category.

SEA Prevalence Data Tables

For the tables reporting prevalence data in Chapters 3 and 4, data were included only if the state reported percentages in all categories. For example, in Table 3-3, a state had to report all of the categories regarding use of tobacco by 10th grade students (percentages adding to 100) in order for any of their responses to be included in the counts for that school year.

Incident Data Tables

The incident data tables presented in Chapter 4 show all data reported by a state, even when data for certain categories within a table were not available. The code MD indicates that data were missing.