

Educational Leaders for Effective Practice

[Home](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Day 1](#)

[Day 2](#)

[Day 3](#)

[Day 4](#)

[Day 5](#)

[Resources & Links](#)

[Event Support](#)



[Discussion Area](#)

The Role of a Prevention Coordinator: Research to Practice



"If education is going to be successful in terms of broadly educating kids, then every school or every district is going to have to have someone who acts as a prevention coordinator and pulls these pieces together. We've learned if nothing else, there are issues of academics, drugs, safety, citizenship, character, and violence prevention that schools confront. A prevention coordinator is the one who can bring all of these things together and learn how to support their effective implementation and building sustainability into school over time. This is because they think about the lengths of this work and without somebody like this, I think that it's not going to happen. That's been a valuable experiment for the government to take on. One of the lessons learned from this is that these people make an extraordinary difference in the lives of a lot of students and in the job satisfaction of teachers and professionals in the schools."

Roger Weissberg, president, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

A prevention program must be integrated within the fabric of the school -- with its particular characteristics, students and needs -- for it to be effective.

Fortunately, a model exists for schools to address these pressing issues of the need for effective, evidence-based prevention programs that are well implemented. At its core is a coordinator who is dedicated to the complex task of helping schools identify and employ effective solutions to the difficult problem of substance abuse and violence among youth. The results of six years of implementation of the Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program, a federal program supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, show that a school coordinator can significantly impact the degree to which prevention programs are effective. We will share many examples of the ways that these prevention coordinators have improved the lives of students, teachers, and staff in schools across the country.

[Click here](#) for an example of the steps one school coordinator used to develop an effective prevention plan

The Need for the Prevention Coordinator Program Is Clear



"This initiative is an effective approach in part because of the demand on teachers, on administration, and on outside agencies," said Karen Smith, middle school coordinator at the Alief Independent School District in Texas. "They don't have the time and resources anymore to do this kind of advocacy work for students. And when you put a fulltime person like ourselves in these roles to research an effective program, bring together collaborative stakeholders, select a program to implement, do the inhouse training, and do the evaluation, then the kids are actually getting the prevention they may not get otherwise with the demands of standardized testing."

Personal Communication 2005

Our nation's schools should be a safe haven for teaching and learning and be free of crime and violence. Even though students are less likely to be victims of a violent crime at school than away from school (Indicators [1](#) and [2](#)), any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved but also may disrupt the educational process and affect bystanders, the school itself, and the surrounding community.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2005

The federal government created the Coordinator Program to address violence and substance abuse issues in schools in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

While most of the nation's schools are safe places, some schools have serious crime and violence problems that compromise the learning environment and endanger children and teachers.

In 1999-2000, 71 percent of public elementary and secondary schools experienced at least one violent incident, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (Indicator 7: Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2005). Serious violence is defined as rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attacks or fights without a weapon, threats of physical attack with a weapon or robberies either with or without a weapon.) (A smaller percentage of schools experience the most serious form of violence. According to the National Center, 20 percent of public schools experienced at least one serious violent incident.)

Many schools without serious crime often experience other types of violence, such as bullying, and drug and alcohol use, that impede learning. In 1999-2000, schools were more likely to have a serious problem with student bullying than with any other discipline problem (29 percent), according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Student acts of disrespect for teachers and gang activities (19 percent each) were the second most serious problems for public schools.

Alcohol and drug use remain high among high school students. In 2003, three-fourths of students in grades 9 through 12 reported having at least one drink of alcohol, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System in 2003. In addition, 40 percent of high school students had used marijuana one or more times during their lifetime. However, the onset of alcohol and other drug use behaviors occur before high school. In 2003, 28 percent of high school students reported that they first drank alcohol before age 13, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

For decades schools have attempted to address these issues with limited success. A 1997 U.S. Department of Education sponsored study yielded some critical insights on what makes for

effective prevention programming. The study, which took place between 1990 and 1995, investigated the effectiveness of school-based prevention programs. The longitudinal study examined 19 drug prevention programs undertaken by the U.S. Department of Education. The programs were funded by the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to expand and strengthen drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention programs in communities around the nation (the Act is now called the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994).

[Click here](#) for detailed findings of the longitudinal study

Barriers to Implementation

The 1997 U.S. Department of Education study found that the most common barrier to achieving full implementation of prevention programs was a lack of leadership by the individual assigned to coordinate the program, a situation frequently exacerbated by the coordinator having other responsibilities within the district.

As a result, program coordinators did not consistently follow through to monitor the activities being implemented in the schools. In addition, there was a lack of awareness by the program coordinators or other district administrators of the full spectrum of prevention strategies that might be employed and other district priorities interfered with prevention efforts. Another barrier to success cited was community members who did not believe there were drug problems among their youth.

Key Finding from the Study

In order to have maximum effect, the report found, coordinators should be employed full-time in drug prevention and school safety programming, be well trained, be familiar with prevention research and be careful in monitoring program implementation in the schools.

Silvia, E.S., and Thorne, J. (1997)

“One of the aspects of program stability that appears to be key is the degree of availability of the prevention program coordinator for directing the [prevention] program,” wrote Silvia and Thorne. “In the districts where prevention program coordinators were available full-time, the program was able to gather additional resources, solicit greater community involvement and afford more planning and coordinator. We also found that these districts offered more district-wide teacher training in drug prevention education. The majority of districts with full-time prevention program coordinators were among those with comprehensive prevention programs. By contrast, districts with prevention program coordinators who were available only one-quarter of their time or less for directing the program tended to have programs shaped more by availability of resources and other pragmatic reasons than by careful planning and assessment. The majority of these districts had minimal program implementation.”

Silvia, E.S., and Thorne, J. (1997). *School-based prevention programs: A longitudinal study in selected school districts.*

Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program

Based on these findings, the U.S. Congress funded the Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program in 1999. The purpose of the program was to recruit, hire, and train drug prevention and school safety program coordinators in middle schools that had significant drug, discipline, and violence problems. The federal grants funded 915 coordinators throughout the country.

The U.S. Congress reauthorized the program in 2002 as part of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Under the reauthorization, the program expanded to include individuals to serve as drug prevention and safety coordinators in elementary, middle, and high schools with significant drug and school safety problems. Approximately 150 coordinators were hired under this program. This demonstration project was designed to test and validate comprehensive prevention approaches that can be used by schools across the country.

These coordinators had no job responsibilities other than researching, implementing and evaluating prevention programs in their schools. They had the time to train teachers in new methods of classroom education and management. They had time to develop relationships with community agencies that could provide key resources to schools. They had time to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and make any adjustments. The program was a demonstration project that was designed to test and validate comprehensive prevention approaches that can be used by schools across the country.

[Click here for the history of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program](#)

Learnings from Middle School Coordinators

"Isaac Litton Middle School is located in an urban area of Nashville, Tennessee. Approximately 58 percent of the students are black, 40 percent are white, and 2 percent are Hispanic/Latino. About 67 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Students receive little parental and community support and present school staff with a multitude of issues. Our school was identified as in need of intervention of prevention services, based on our suspension rates and other data."

"Following multiple discussions with our school principal, I mapped all of the agencies and organizations involved with our school to determine what they offered our students and where they were most successful. What I discovered was a lot of duplication. To address this issue, we formed the Related Services Team. The team, comprising our principal, service providers and myself, collectively decided that providers would focus their attention on issues identified by our needs assessment. Each agency took responsibility for a particular area/issue; this gave us the capacity to address all of our identified needs. Providers on the team support one another, and we monitor our progress monthly. As a result of our collective work, we were able to reduce out-of-school suspensions this year by more than 30 percent compared to last year. The formation of our Related Services Team has proven to be effective in our attempts to create a better learning community in our school."

Raphael Crawford

Middle School Coordinator from Nashville, Tennessee

Source: Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education (2002). *Leaving No Child Behind: Results-Based Strategies for Safe and Drug-Free Schools*.

Principles of Effectiveness Define the Coordinator's Role

In 1998, the Department of Education established a set of Principles of Effectiveness for all recipients of Safe and Drug-free Schools funds including the Middle School Coordinators. These Principles of Effectiveness call for grant recipients to:

- Base their program selections on needs assessment.
- Develop measurable goals and objectives for their prevention programs.
- Implement research-based, effective programs.
- Evaluate their success at regular intervals and use evaluation findings to improve programming.

All middle school and national coordinators were expected to follow those principles of effectiveness in developing, implementing and evaluating their programs.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded grants to Local Education Agencies with significant issues in drug use, drug prevention, and school safety to hire middle school and later, National Coordinators who would work in one to seven schools. They would help schools and communities start the process of implementing research-based prevention strategies.

The role of the coordinator was to:

- Identify research-based drug and violence prevention strategies and programs.
- Assist schools in adopting the most successful strategies, including training of teachers and staff
- Develop, conduct and analyze assessments of school crime and drug problems
- Work with community agencies and organizations to ensure that students' needs are met
- Work with parents and students to obtain information about effective programs and strategies and encourage their participation in program selection and implementation.
- Assist in the development and implementation of evaluation strategies.
- Identify additional funding sources for drug prevention and school safety.
- Provide feedback to state educational agencies on programs and activities that have proven to be successful in reducing drug use and violent behavior.

As one middle school coordinator put it, "Some schools already have some specific ideas in mind and are ready to implement strategies, but maybe just need a catalyst to get things going. That's where you [the coordinator] come in."

“What's unique about this program is that often federal grants do not specify a job description [for key staff],” said Amalia Cuervo, program officer, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education. “. . . This grant, which was in excess of \$120 million over the last five years, came with prescribed job description for the coordinators. In retrospect, that was really useful. It was very helpful to the districts to have the expectations so clearly laid out. The job description is based specifically on principles of effectiveness.”

Coordinators could not provide any direct services. Instead, they were to spearhead the development and implementation of a comprehensive prevention plan tailored to their schools' needs. The coordinators also had access to intensive technical assistance that was provided by the Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. That assistance included:

- A five-day intensive workshops for all new coordinators that provided training on their specific roles and responsibilities. The training assured that all coordinators had the same background and skills for working in their schools and districts in supporting the identification, selection, and effective implementation of evidence based prevention practices. Coordinators could also attend two-day leadership institutes, which provided depth beyond the core training in key competencies in organizational development, group management and systems change. These trainings were also a cost-effective alternative to providing on-site training to coordinators scattered across the country.
- On-line courses that provided training on duties of the coordinators such as how to conduct a needs assessment, selecting research-based prevention programs and evaluating programs and as well as training on topical issues, such as crisis response, bullying, truancy and youth gangs. These courses provide coordinators with the opportunity to go into greater depth on topics covered in the face-to-face training and to work at their own pace without the need to travel.
- A Listserv was made available to coordinators so that they could share tips and connect with one another.

The training events were constantly updated and improved based on feedback from the coordinators. Shortly after the project began, experienced coordinators were asked to share their “lessons learned” with new coordinators. Through this process a cadre of prevention specialists who were truly experts in this field was developed.

[Click here for example of training](#)

All of this training, including the 40-hour core training, is currently available at ww.k12coordinator.org for any school or district to use. This represents a rich resource of information on prevention programming that you may choose to access.

Learnings from Middle School Coordinators

"I have been able to start partnerships at my seven schools by attending their student assistance team meetings. This is where the names of students in trouble, either emotionally or academically, are discussed. On these teams are teachers, principals, counselors, etc. It has been very effective for me to be able to suggest different programs that are available within the community for that student and/or the students' parent to attend. I also help this committee identify what programs for student success they have within their own school. It has been an eye-opener for both school personnel and community leaders to learn just what is available for students from both arenas."

Ruth Ann Wilson, Middle School Coordinator
Hooper, Utah

Source: Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education (2002). *Leaving No Child Behind: Results-Based Strategies for Safe and Drug-Free Schools*.

Evaluating the Coordinator Project

Researchers at the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) are conducting a five-year national evaluation of the role and impact of middle school coordinators on drug and violence prevention programs. The study has three main objectives. They are to:

1. Investigate the extent to which middle school coordinators improves prevention programming.
2. Document the process, extent and quality of implementation so it may be replicated in other districts.
3. Determine if improved programming also leads to improved program outcomes for youth drug use and school safety.

The evaluation consisted of three parts:

1. An implementation study that describes the overall implementation of the middle school coordinator program across all districts. Evaluators used an annual web-based survey of Middle School Coordinators and their supervisors.
2. A matched comparison study that assesses program outcomes over three years in districts with and without the Middle School Coordinator program. The sample included 30 randomly selected Middle School Coordinator districts from the 2000 group and 30 comparison districts. The evaluators collected data annually that included seventh grade student surveys on attitudes and behaviors related to substance abuse and school safety. They also conducted staff surveys and collected incidents of violence and disciplinary actions.
3. A case study that takes an in-depth look at 10 Middle School Coordinators sites to describe successful strategies and barriers to implementation. Evaluators conducted interviews and focus groups with coordinators, school staff, parents and community

representatives.



The results of the evaluation have not been released; however, researcher Suyapa Silvia provided the following preliminary findings:

According to 59 percent of school staff surveyed, the middle school coordinators influenced prevention programs to change their curricula. Fifty-three percent of school staff said that the coordinators influenced them to change the priority given to prevention and 43 percent said that the coordinators increased the fidelity of curriculum delivery as a result of the training and support from the coordinators.

- In addition, more than 85 percent of the supervisors of district coordinators believe that since hiring the middle school coordinators, schools are implementing better prevention programs and are more effective in meeting prevention and treatment needs of students and staff.

Silvia also carried out a case study of 10 middle school sites.

“Anecdotal data from the case studies indicate that there was a lot of enthusiasm from the principals for these coordinators,” she said. “The principals saw a lot of improvement in the programs with respect to what was taught, how much was taught, how the teachers were educated, and how parents were involved. Administrators liked the fact that coordinators were, for the first time, bringing all the needs and information together, conducted assessments and tailored the programs to fit the school. Without a coordinator, they couldn't do it.”

Further evidence of the impact of the coordinators' work is the decision by principals and superintendents across the country to continue funding the positions once federal funding ended. In Anchorage, Alaska, Alief, Texas, Denver, Colo., Madison, Wisc. and Palm Beach County, Florida, among many other sites, coordinators have been hired by their school districts or continued their work with other grant funding obtained by the district. In Anchorage, Alaska two of the coordinators have been hired by the school district to work district wide. One will focus on bullying prevention and the other will work with helping non-English speaking parents, and their children, feel more connected to the schools. Superintendent Carol Comeau said it is vital for school districts to have a prevention coordinator.

San Diego Study Finds Positive Change with Coordinators

A 2004 study by Hoffman Clark & Associates of the San Diego Schools Middle School Coordinator Program found that:

- Middle School Coordinator sites experienced a mean increase of prevention resources
- Over the program years there was a statistically significant decrease in crimes against persons in schools with middle school coordinators.
- Schools without middle school coordinators did not experience such a decrease.
- Drug and alcohol violations or suspensions decreased for schools with and without middle school coordinators.
- Parents increased their knowledge of alcohol and other drug

prevention resources.

- Staff increased their ability to conduct prevention programming.

The authors stated, "Both the numbers and subjective data are evidence of positive change that has occurred at the sites where middle school programs were conducted." This study has also provided evidence that the placement of a designated prevention counselor at high risk middle schools can impact suspensions and safety outcomes.

Source: Hoffman Clark & Associates, *Final Evaluation Report: San Diego City Schools, Middle School Coordinator Program II*, August 2004.

Based on the early results of the national evaluation of the Middle School Coordinator Program, these individuals have had a positive impact on drug and safety prevention programs in local school districts. This evidence is supported by the fact that a number of school districts have found the coordinators to be such a valuable resource that they have funded the positions with either their own funds or other grant support.

One of the critical functions the coordinators have provided is conducting a needs assessment to gather data to support the development of individualized prevention programs. In Day 3, we will look at the critical role a needs assessment plays in the successful development of a prevention plan and the characteristics of effective programs.



Click [here](#) to print today's materials in PDF format.



Discussion Questions

Please think about the questions below and share your responses, comments, and/or any questions about today's material in the discussion area.

- If your school has a prevention coordinator, in your opinion, what has been the impact of having this position?
- In what ways could your school benefit from a coordinator position?

This completes today's work.

Please visit the [Discussion Area](#) to share your responses to the discussion questions!

References for Day 2:

Cheek, J. (July 2005). Personal communication.

DeVoe, J.F., Peter, K., Noonan, M., Snyder, T.D., and Baum, K. (2005). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2005* (NCES 2006-001/NCJ 210697). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006001.pdf>

Greenberg, M.T., Weissberg, R.P., Utne, O'Brien, M, Zins, J.E., Fredericks, L., Resnick H., and Elias, M.J. (June/July 2003). Enhancing School-Based Prevention and Youth Development Through Coordinated Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning. *American Psychologist*, 58 (6/7), 466-474.

Henry, S. (2000). What Is School Violence? An Integrated Definition. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 567: 16-29.

Hill, P. (May 2005). Personal communication.

Osher, D. (January 2005). Personal communication.

Osher, D., Dwyer, K., and Jackson, J. (2004). *Safe, Supportive and Successful Schools, Step by Step*. Longmont, Colorado: Sopris West Educational Services.

Payne, A.A., Gottfredson, D.C., and Gottfredson, G.D. (2003). Schools as Communities: The Relationship Between Communal School Organization, Student Bonding, and School Disorder. *Criminology*, 41: 749-778.

Quinn, K. *School-based Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Socially and Emotionally Challenged Children and Youth*.

Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs. (2003). Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Siliva, S. (July, 2005). Personal communication.

Smith, K. (April 2005). Personal communication.

Wilson, Ruth Ann. (May 2005). Personal communication.



Educational Leaders for Effective Practice

[Return to Day](#)[2](#)

How One Coordinator Made a Difference in Middle School

“Here are some effective strategies we have used to implement prevention programs at our middle school:

- **Provide support to classroom teachers who are implementing new prevention programs.** Most prevention curricula require ‘active learning’; this can be a new and exhausting experience for a teacher. I spend a lot of time in the classroom observing, engaging in feedback with the teachers, and listening to their concerns. I am in the classroom when they try new ideas and programs, and I give them support, both during and (especially) after. I also have created a survey that students complete at the end of each program, designed to be constructive and positive. This helps teachers see how much students prefer active learning and how much new information they are absorbing (great positive feedback!). Finally, I make sure that the principal and community members are aware of the teachers who are taking on this new journey of more active learning, research-based programs, etc.
- **Involve students and support integrated learning.** We conducted a focus group in our eighth grade health class to assess students' interests and learning styles. We learned, among other things, that students are interested in learning about methamphetamines, club drugs, and eating disorders, and that they prefer being taught through small-group activities, small-group presentations, up-to-date videos, and have speakers come into the classroom. This information helped us strengthen our existing program.
- **Schedule presentations by local professionals in the field to complement prevention program topics.** This not only makes topics ‘real’ for students and faculty but builds and strengthens school-family-community partnerships. For example, we had representatives from the county Juvenile Court Probation Office and a deputy from the Sheriff's Department give classroom presentations on problems associated with alcohol and methamphetamine use. We also had a panel comprising our probation officer, a juvenile court judge, and the assistant county attorney make an evening parent education presentation.
- **Use the school newsletter to communicate about prevention topics and what is being done in the classroom (middle school students often don't tell their parents about these activities).** I coordinate the prevention section with our Juvenile Court Probation Office, health teacher, physical education teacher, school nurse, and principal.

- **Write grants.** This has helped us garner support for specific issues and programs -- even when the requested funding was not awarded. For example, our physical education program became a pilot site for the University of Northern Iowa, despite the fact that the U.S. Department of Education didn't fund our 2001 application for a Physical Education Program grant. This provided our district with a curriculum, training to physical education teachers, and ongoing technical assistance at no cost. The physical education department is now very receptive to trying new prevention programs and strategies.”

Jean Drey

Middle School Coordinator from Sioux Rapids, Iowa

Source: Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education (2002). *Leaving No Child Behind: Results-Based Strategies for Safe and Drug-Free Schools*.

Educational Leaders for Effective Practice

[Return to Day](#)


2

Study Points Out Needs in Prevention Programs

A 1997 longitudinal study of 19 prevention programs undertaken by the U.S. Department of Education noted these key findings:

- *Some drug prevention programs improved student outcomes but effects were small.* Student outcomes were somewhat better in districts where the prevention programs had greater stability over time and in districts with more extensive program components, including student support services.
- *Few schools employed program approaches that have been found effective in previous research.* The consensus of the current research literature is that certain approaches, such as those that teach children how to resist and deal with powerful social influences for using drugs and those that correct those misperceptions of peer drug use, have the greatest potential for making a difference for students. However, these approaches are rarely implemented. A likely reason is the higher cost of these program approaches, particularly in terms of teacher training and staff time.
- *Program delivery was variable and inconsistent, even within schools.* To increase the likelihood that a program will be delivered faithfully, teachers must be given proper and sufficient training so they will be confident and prepared to deliver the program. Many of the approaches that aim to teach students how to resist and deal with social influences, for example, require teaching methods that are very different from the traditional methods that most teachers employ in their classrooms. These approaches utilize role-playing, small-group discussion, and other interactive methods and often use peer leaders to deliver portions of the program. Teachers may be more reluctant to use these types of approaches because they require more intensive training, more time in the classroom, and more planning.
- *Few districts seem to know about or consider research findings when planning their prevention programs.* Only a few districts engaged in a well-defined process of developing their programs. Such a process would include the following:
 - Assessing the problems of students in the district's schools and in the community
 - Setting priorities for how to address these problems.
 - Reviewing relevant research that links these problems and priorities to effective strategies
 - Selecting strategies that appear to have promise for their district.
 - Providing the leadership and training necessary to implement the selected strategies

- Assessing progress in meeting the needs identified in the first step
- Adjusting program strategies accordingly

 *Few districts also conducted formal program evaluations to assess their program's effectiveness and identify areas in need of improvement.*

While all school districts conducted informal assessments of their programs periodically, fewer than half conducted and responded to the evidence of more formal evaluations in selecting or altering programs.

Source: Silvia, E.S., & Thorne, J. (1997). *School-based prevention programs: A longitudinal study in selected school districts. Executive Summary. Final Report.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Educational Leaders for Effective Practice

[Return to Day](#)
2

Feature: The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools -- Focusing on Prevention That Works

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) in the U.S. Department of Education is one of the most important incubators of effective school-based prevention and health promotion programming today. OSDFS has its roots in the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) program, first authorized by Congress in 1986 as a response to alarmingly high rates of alcohol and other drug use among children and youth. Previously, the Department had funded only technical assistance activities related to drug prevention, at a total of about \$3 million annually.

Through the SDFSC program, the Department made grants totaling \$200 million in fiscal year 1987, the first year of funding. The amount increased steadily, reaching \$624 million in fiscal year 1992.

In 1994, the SDFSC program was reauthorized as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The most significant change was the inclusion of violence prevention activities and a focus on school safety. As noted by OSDFS Associate Deputy Under Secretary William Modzeleski in testimony to Congress in 1999, "Since many of the issues related to drug and violence prevention are interrelated, the revised [program] was intended to have school districts develop integrated programs that addressed student `risk factors' that cut across alcohol and other drug use as well as violent behavior."

With expanded funding and grant-making came a growing emphasis on program accountability. Especially significant in setting program accountability standards was the publication in June 1998 of the program's "Principles of Effectiveness." These principles require grant recipients to use objective data to identify their needs, establish measurable goals for their programs, implement programs of demonstrated effectiveness, and assess their progress toward achieving their goals. Throughout, the emphasis is on high-quality programs and results.

Another step in the program's evolution occurred in September 2002 when the Department announced the formation of a successor to the OSDFSC. According to Secretary of Education Rod Paige, OSDFS was designed to bring together into a single unit programs that were previously scattered among several different offices. "Folding all programs that deal with safety, health, and citizenship into one office will enable us to better respond to the critical needs of schools in these areas and also help us to develop a broad-based, comprehensive strategy," Paige said.

The 2005 proposed federal budget includes \$838.9 million for OSDFS programs. Of this, \$440.9 million is slated for SDFSC State Grants to provide sustained support for drug and violence prevention programs in school districts and communities throughout the

country. Among the many different programs administered directly by OSDFS, especially noteworthy in relation to social and emotional learning are the [Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative](#), which OSDFS carries out in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP); the [Mentoring Program](#), which pairs at-risk youth with older mentors, a strategy that has been proven effective in many different settings; and the [Character Education and Civic Education](#) programs, which support activities to help students understand, care about, and act on core ethical and citizenship values.

The scope of all the OSDFS programs far exceeds the limitations of this article. For more details, go to <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/programs.html>.

Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (June 2004) e-newsletter.

Educational Leaders for Effective Practice

Return to Day

1

Prevention Coordinators and the Principles of Effectiveness

Example of Coordinators' Training

The workshops start with a discussion of the schools' role in effective prevention: Schools should serve as the hub of community prevention activities for youth, rather than try to solve these problems on their own. To illustrate the concept of school-linked approaches, the trainers offer a collection of scenarios like this one:

After and sometimes before school, a handful of middle school students regularly head to a nearby park to get high. They purchase most of their drugs nearby from older teenagers, young adults, and in some cases older brothers and sisters. Teachers suspect drug use because they have noticed a dramatic drop in school performance among most of these students. Neighbors know where the kids are getting drugs but have not said anything to the police or school.

“Most parents only think about prevention issues at the time of a crisis, but typically prevention coordinators are not working in crisis situations,” said Yvette Lamb, former director of training for the National Training Center for coordinators. “The coordinators can raise awareness about prevention and help improve school and community connections. What better place for schools and communities to come together than on creating safe and drug-free schools?”

In helping the coordinators prepare for their job, the training manual lists three levels of change:

Changing Individual Behavior

- Social and thinking skills education for all students
- Early identification, referral, and intervention for students and parents at risk
- Safe and supervised alternative activities for students at risk

Changing Schools and Classrooms

- Classroom restructuring for more engaging and interactive education environments
- School-community collaboration in program design and delivery
- Clear school policies to deter substance use and violence that can be integrated into more general school reform efforts
- Enforcement of school policies, with clear reward structure and unambiguous sanctions

- Schoolwide communication campaigns to influence school norms about substance use and violence

Influencing Community Change

- Community policies to limit availability of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and weapons in the community
- Enforcement of community policies to limit youth access to alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and weapons
- Community-wide communication campaigns to influence community norms about substance use and violence

Source: Bridging Schools and Communities: National Training Center for middle school drug prevention and school safety coordinators. (Fall 2001). *Mosaic*, Education Development Center, Newton, Mass. 3, (2).