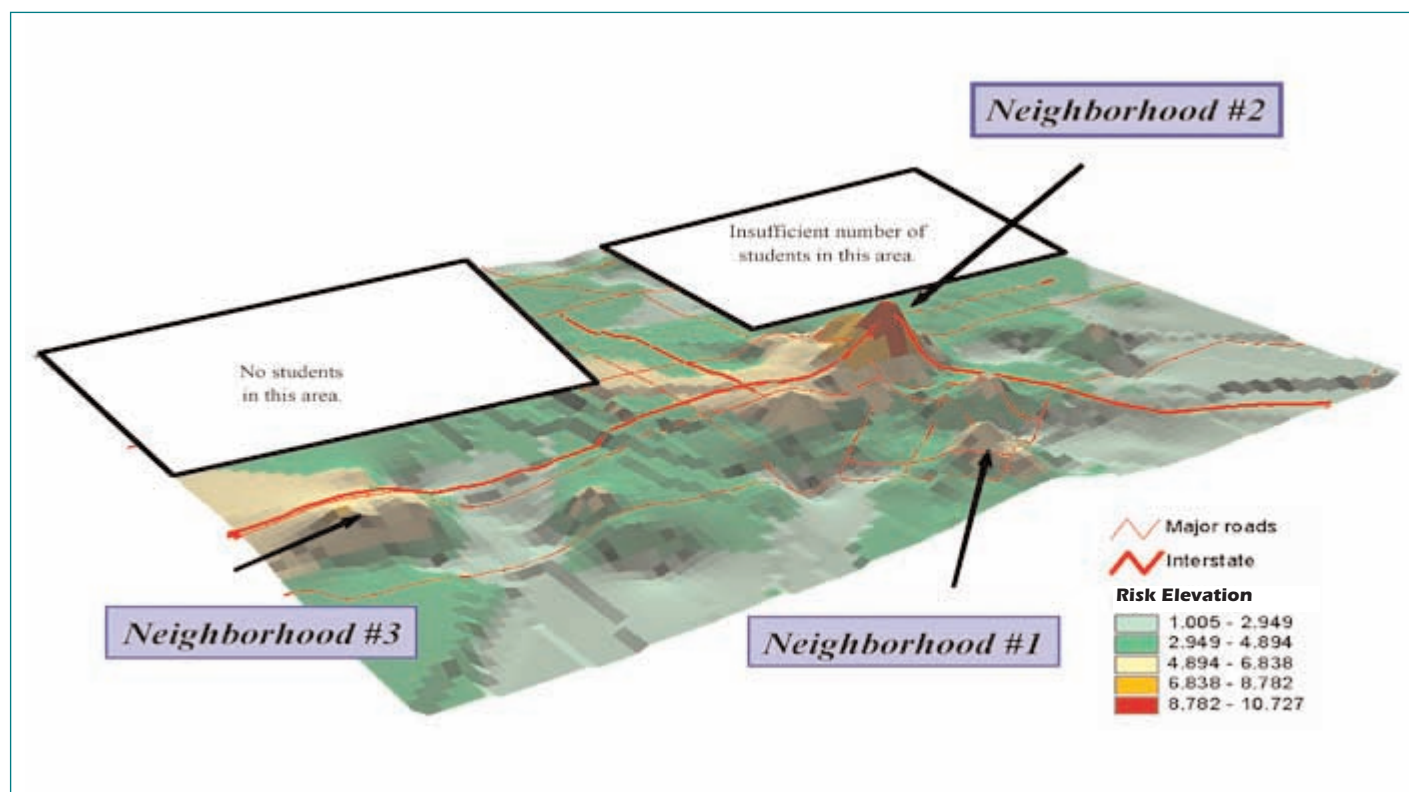


Graphic Evidence

A Topography of Risk and Protection



The science of drug abuse prevention uses information about community epidemiology to design interventions to reduce or eliminate drug abuse. A first step is to identify factors that predict the likelihood that drug abuse and dependence will occur in a given community or part of a community. Communities, families, schools, peer groups, and individuals may each be the locus of risk factors that have been linked to higher rates of drug abuse and protective factors associated with lower rates.

The map above reflects the distribution of 23 drug abuse risk factors and 10 protective factors in three neighborhoods of a California community, based on responses to the Communities That Care (CTC) youth survey and community records. The hills and mountain are danger zones. These elevations are not above sea level, but above a baseline level of risk for drug abuse. The youth in Neighborhood 2, with its towering peak of risk, clearly have the greatest need for prevention interventions.

A community can choose from a number of strategies and approaches for reducing risks for and enhancing protections against drug abuse. The next step, once the risk assessment is in hand, will be to set priorities based on the prevalence and distribution of specific risk factors and an assessment of the available prevention resources. Should a community decide to follow the CTC process, it will formulate its plan of attack utilizing the *Communities That Care Prevention Strategies: A Research Guide to What Works*, which lists policies and programs that scientific studies have shown to be effective against each of the 23 risk factors covered by the CTC youth survey.

Source: Hawkins, J.E.; Catalano, R.F.; and Arthur, M.W.; 2002. *Promoting science-based prevention in communities*. *Addictive Behaviors* 27(6):951-976. Copyright ©2002, Elsevier Science Ltd. Reprinted with permission.