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Youth,
Education,
& Society

Results on School Policies and Programs

Overview of Key Findings

2003



A Study Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIETY
RESULTS ON SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Overview of Key Findings, 2003

by

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Executive Summary

Today's school administrators face multiple challenges, from raising accountability and achievement standards to creating safe, drug-free learning environments. On the School Policies and Programs Questionnaire, school administrators ranked alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) problems as the second most important problem their schools face. ATOD problems ranked second only to concerns about academic underachievement.

This report provides you with key findings from the Youth, Education, and Society (YES) study of school resources, policies, and ATOD prevention programs. The following are some of the highlights for the 2003 school year.

What Types of Schools Have Fewer ATOD Problems?

According to School Administrators Surveyed . . .

- Private schools report fewer ATOD problems than public schools.
- Middle schools report fewer ATOD problems than high schools.
- Schools that have higher proportions of African American students report fewer ATOD problems.

What School Factors Are Associated With Fewer ATOD Problems?

According to School Administrators Surveyed . . .

- Better race relations, closed campuses, and less staff smoking were associated with fewer reported ATOD problems.
- Parental involvement in students' schooling was strongly related to fewer reported drug problems, especially in public middle schools.

How Effective Are Drug Use Prevention Programs?

According to School Administrators Surveyed . . .

- Over the past few years, fewer schools have reported having ATOD prevention programs in their curricula, with a sizable number of schools dropping the use of the D.A.R.E. program; this trend continued in 2003. The majority of schools do teach ATOD prevention in the classroom, but respondents are fairly neutral about the judged effectiveness of most ATOD programs.
- School administrators rated **multi-year** ATOD programs and those **required** for most or all students as slightly more effective than single-year and non-required ATOD programs.
- ATOD programs taught in classes that focused on adolescent life skills or that targeted ATOD abusers were rated more highly than ATOD programs taught in regular academic classes like physical education or health education.
- Community prevention programs can supplement school programs in urban and suburban areas; rural schools tend to rely more on school-sponsored ATOD prevention programs.

Student drug abuse continues to be a challenge that school administrators must face. Many administrators are demonstrating their commitment to this important struggle and to their students' health by trying new strategies for reducing drug use among their students.

Project Description

The Purpose of the Project

The School Policies and Programs Questionnaire was administered in a national sample of schools in order to collect information about how school policies and prevention programs impact young peoples' behavior and attitudes toward alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to determine which policies and programs are most effective in reducing students' ATOD use and to inform policymakers and school administrators of the results.

A Description of the Questionnaire

The School Policies and Programs Questionnaire was mailed in the spring or summer of 2003. The project has collected this information since 1998. The information presented here reflects responses to the 2003 survey, and where appropriate, comparisons over the six-year period may be drawn. The questionnaire asked about the following:

- General characteristics of the school, teaching staff, and students
- Resources available to students in the school and in the local community
- School policies regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
- Types of prevention programs that are taught in the school district

A Description of Participating Schools

A total of 160 secondary schools across the nation participated in 2003, reflecting a response rate of 80%. From the total sample of schools in 2003, there were:

- 131 public and 29 private schools.
- 52 junior/middle schools and 108 high schools.
- 28 schools from the Northeast region, 44 schools from the North Central region, 54 schools from the South, and 34 schools from the West.

The primary respondents to the questionnaire were school principals (81%), followed by other school administrators, teachers, and counselors. In most cases, however, the primary respondents at schools relied on other school staff to help gather information to complete the questionnaire.

Challenges in Today's Schools

Ratings of School Problems

We asked respondents to rate the severity of various discipline problems in their school on a scale of 1 “not a problem” to 5 “a serious problem.”

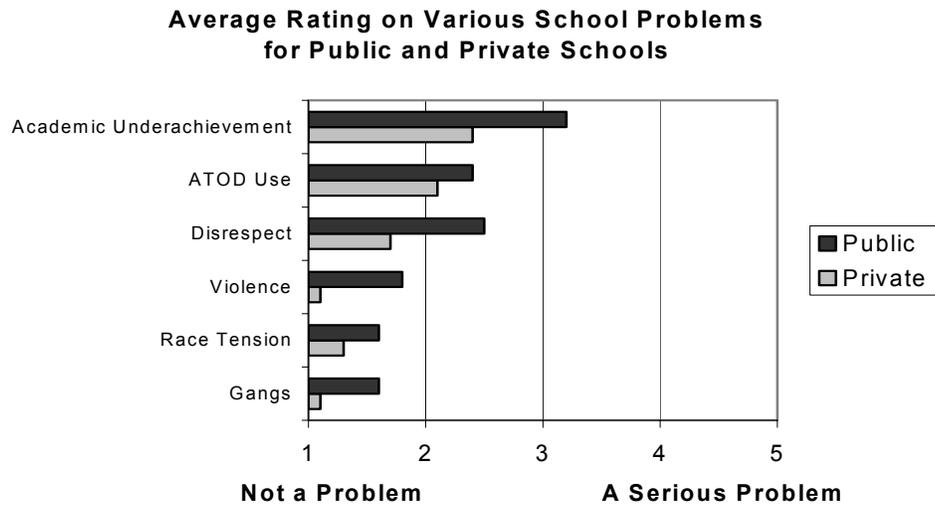
The Percentage and Average Ratings on School Problems

	Not a Problem		Somewhat of a Problem		A Serious Problem	Average Rating (1-5)
Type of Problem	1	2	3	4	5	
Academic underachievement	5%	25%	43%	18%	10%	3.0
Use of alcohol/tobacco/other drugs	18%	39%	31%	13%	0%	2.3
Student disrespect of teachers	18%	45%	26%	8%	3%	2.3
School violence	49%	35%	13%	3%	1%	1.7
Racial tension among students	51%	40%	8%	0%	1%	1.6
Gang activity	64%	21%	10%	4%	1%	1.6

- Respondents reported that academic underachievement and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by students were the biggest discipline problems in their schools, followed closely by student disrespect for teachers. These rankings have been consistent across all six years of our study.
- In 2003, respondents were asked to rate separately the severity of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use problems that their school faced. Forty-five percent of respondents reported that student tobacco use was at least somewhat of a problem, while 43% reported that alcohol use and 40% that illicit drug use was at least somewhat of a problem in their school.
- Gang activity and racial tension among students were not considered serious problems in most schools, although 54% of respondents reported that it was at least somewhat true that students ate lunch separately with their own racial/ethnic group.

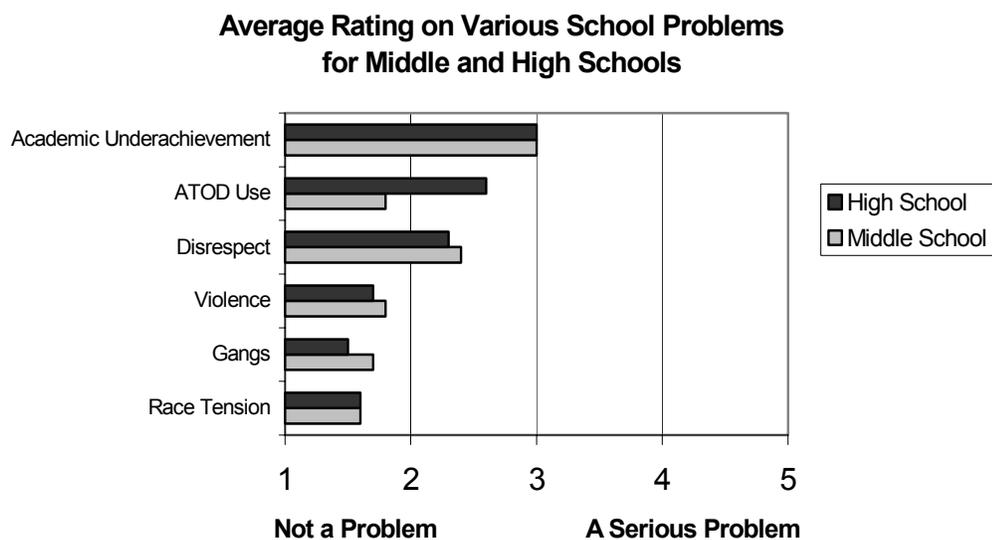
Comparisons of Public and Private Schools

In the figure below, we compare the average rating of each problem for public and private schools. Public schools reported **significantly more** challenges than private schools with each problem listed except ATOD use.



Comparisons of Middle and High Schools

We also compared how middle schools and high schools rated each of these problems in their schools. The only problem that differed **significantly** between middle and high schools was reported ATOD use—respondents from high schools rated this as a far more serious problem than respondents from middle schools.



Meeting the Challenge of ATOD Use in Schools

Barriers to Implementing Substance Abuse Prevention Programs

In the 2003 questionnaire, we asked respondents what barriers there were to implementing ATOD prevention programs in their schools. The table below shows the percentages of respondents that identified important barriers to implementing prevention curricula.

Important Barrier	Percent of Schools
Competing demands for teaching other subject areas	71%
Lack of time for teacher training	54%
Lack of money/resources for teacher training	49%
Lack of money/resources for purchasing instructional materials	48%
Lack of adequate instructional materials	21%
Substance use prevention is not a high priority for teachers	20%
Inability to identify an effective program	18%
Substance use prevention is not a high priority for school or district administrators	16%
Resistance from parents for teaching substance use prevention	6%

Respondents reported that lack of time and resources were the most important barriers to teaching drug use prevention in schools today. These results hold true across public, private, middle, and high schools. It seems from these results that teaching of prevention is important to most teachers, administrators, and parents, but school schedules and resources are tied up in other subject areas.

School Factors Related to ATOD Problems

We asked respondents about many school resources and practices, and we examined whether any of these resources and practices were **related** to the school ATOD problems. Note that the relationships are associations, which do not imply or show causation.

1. Security Measures

We asked about the following security measures:

- Closed campus
- Police officers
- Security guards
- Student ID checks
- Patrolling of outside areas by school staff, guards, or police officers
- Faculty or staff monitoring of student restrooms
- Smoke detectors in restrooms
- Hall monitors
- Observational cameras

Across six years of the study, schools were compared on each of these security items to determine whether schools that had each measure differed significantly on their reported ATOD problems.

Having a **closed campus** correlated strongly with **lower** reported ATOD problems, using all six years of our data combined.

Specifically in high schools, **ID checks** were significantly correlated with **lower** reported ATOD problems. In middle schools only, it appears that **police officers** on campus and the use of **smoke detectors in restrooms** were correlated with a **higher** level of reported ATOD problems, probably reflecting the fact that schools with greater problems have been more likely to invoke such measures. In general, however, other security measures in schools seem to be **unrelated** to schools' reported ATOD problems. (See figure on page 15 for the percentages of middle schools and high schools employing various security measures.)

2. School Services

We found a significant, positive relationship between the reported ATOD problems and the total number of counseling services available. (The full list of school services is illustrated in the figure on page 8.) Schools that reported **more ATOD problems** offered **more counseling services**. The counseling services in some schools may have exposed existing problems or may have been established in reaction to drug use or other student problems.

3. Professional Care Providers

Respondents were asked to indicate which professional care providers were employed in their school. (The full list of care providers is illustrated in the figure on page 8.) The ratio of professional, full-time care providers to students is also related to the severity of the ATOD problem in schools, although it is a very weak relationship. The **more care providers**, the **higher** the reported ATOD problem is in schools.

4. Racial Composition

There is a strong relationship between racial composition and reported ATOD problems in all types of schools. Schools that have **more African American students** are **much less** likely to report problems with student ATOD use than are schools with primarily Caucasian or Hispanic students. This is consistent with findings from the Monitoring the Future study that African American students have far lower rates of smoking, drinking, and drug use on average than do white students.¹

We also found that **poorer race relations**, as measured by how students of different races get along, eat lunch together, and interact in and outside of class, are strongly correlated with **higher** reported ATOD problems in all types of schools. Schools—both private and public—that reported problems with racial tension were also more likely to report problems with student ATOD use.

¹ Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2004). *Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2003*. (NIH Publication No. 04-5506). Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 59 pp.

5. Drug Searches

Respondents were asked whether their school conducted searches for illicit drugs based on suspicion or cause, or on a random (unannounced) basis. Searches included desks, lockers, cars, and personal items (including bags, purses, and clothing). We found that while many school policies allow for drug searches, fewer schools actually conduct searches.

- Among all schools in 2003, 98% permitted **searches for cause**, while 84% actually conducted searches for cause.
- Among all schools in 2003, 66% permitted **random drug searches**, but only 48% actually conducted random searches.

When examining the relationship between ATOD problems and drug searches, we found that schools that conducted **searches for cause** reported **significantly more** drug use problems than schools that did not search for cause. This suggests that school officials are accurately responding to a greater-than-average problem when they order for-cause searches. Schools that conducted **random searches** reported slightly higher ATOD problems than schools that did not conduct random searches. Since the difference was not statistically significant, this suggests that random searches do not have a significant deterrent effect.

	Average Rating on ATOD Problem (1 “Not a problem” to 5 “Serious problem”)	
	Schools that search	Schools that do not search
Random	2.5	2.2
Cause	2.4	1.9

The **types of drug searches** that proved most effective at catching students in possession of illicit drugs, however, were random searches of persons and for-cause searches of cars. Generally, the more that students or cars were searched using these two types of searches, the more student violators were caught using or selling illicit drugs. Searches of desks and lockers did not produce similar results.

6. Monitoring Student Compliance

Each year we ask detailed questions about how closely school staff members monitor students while they are inside the school, on school grounds, on school buses, and even at school-related events such as sports and social activities. We found a weak but significant relationship between levels of student monitoring and reported ATOD problems. The **more strictly** students are monitored, the **fewer** ATOD problems respondents report, particularly in public schools.

7. Neighborhood Drug Problem

We asked respondents to rate the frequency of illegal drug sales and the level of alcohol and drug use in the neighborhood surrounding their school on a scale from 1 “low” to 5 “high.” Not surprisingly, schools in neighborhoods judged to have **more severe drug use problems** report **higher** in-school drug use problems across all six years of the study.

8. Staff Smoking

We asked respondents if there was a location in their school or on school grounds where staff members are permitted to smoke, and what percentage of staff smoke regularly. When all six years of data were combined, we found that private schools were more likely than public schools to allow staff smoking at school. In private schools where staff members were permitted to smoke at school, respondents were more likely to report student ATOD problems than in private schools where staff members were not permitted to smoke. There were no differences in public schools. We also asked what percent of staff smoked regularly and found that, in 2003, public schools that had a **higher percentage of staff smokers** also reported **greater** tobacco use problems among students.

9. School Uniforms

Respondents were asked if students in the school were required to wear specific school uniforms. On average, over the past six years, only 14% of our schools required school uniforms (68% of private schools and 3% of public schools). We did find that these schools reported a significantly lower ATOD problem than schools that did not require students to wear uniforms. However, this finding was no longer significant after controlling for whether they were middle schools and/or private schools. Hence, the effect of school uniforms on ATOD problems is most likely due to the characteristics of the schools that require uniforms rather than to the use of uniforms itself.

10. Parental Involvement

We found that **greater parental involvement** in schools was significantly related to **lower** reported tobacco and illicit drug use problems among students across all six years of our study. This relationship was particularly significant for middle schools and in public schools.

Summarizing Factors Related to Reported ATOD Problems (6 Years of Data)

Factors Associated With <i>More</i> Severe Reported ATOD Problems	Factors Associated with <i>Less</i> Severe Reported ATOD Problems	Factors <i>Not</i> Associated With Reported ATOD Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School counseling services • Tobacco prevention or cessation programs available • Drug searches for cause • Number of professional care providers • Neighborhood drug use and trafficking problem (in public schools) • Other school problems (poor academics, disrespect of teachers, violence, gangs, and racial tension) • Staff smoking permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed campus • Private schools • School uniforms • Greater parental involvement • More intense monitoring of student behavior at school and school-related functions • Schools contacting parents when a student is caught violating the school drug policy • Higher percentage of African American students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security guards at schools • Monitoring of student restrooms • Hall monitors • Random drug searches • Total number of security measures

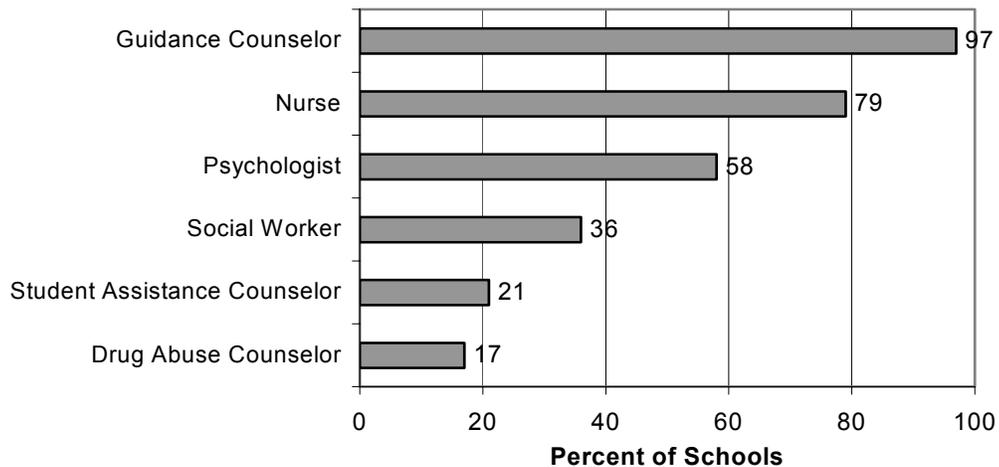
Note: These factors' relationships with reported ATOD problems do not *prove* causation.

Resources Available to Address ATOD Problems

Counseling Staff and Services

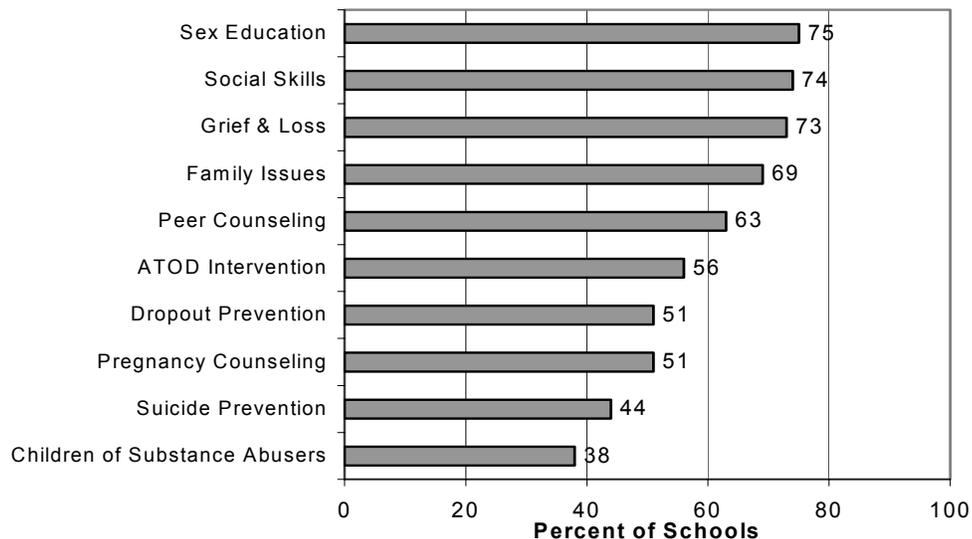
The questionnaire included an item about which **health care providers** and **other professionals** were available to students. While only 17% of schools say they have a drug abuse counselor, 56% of schools report offering counseling to students who are substance abusers. Where there is no drug abuse counselor, this type of counseling is carried out by the school guidance counselor, other staff members, or outside counseling services.

Percentage of Secondary Schools That Have Various Professional Positions



We also asked whether specific **counseling services** were offered to students. The majority of schools in our sample offer these counseling services, with the exceptions of suicide prevention and of counseling for the children of substance abusers.

Percentage of Secondary Schools That Offer Various Services



School Programs and Services

We found that schools in our sample have a variety of ways to deal with their ATOD problems. Responses include the following:

- Personalized ATOD intervention counseling services offered in the school and referrals to services outside the school
- School-sponsored extracurricular activities and groups to divert students from drug use
- Community-sponsored groups and activities
- Commercially and locally developed prevention programs taught in the classroom on a regular basis to all or most of the students

We will describe these measures and their relation to other school issues in the following sections.

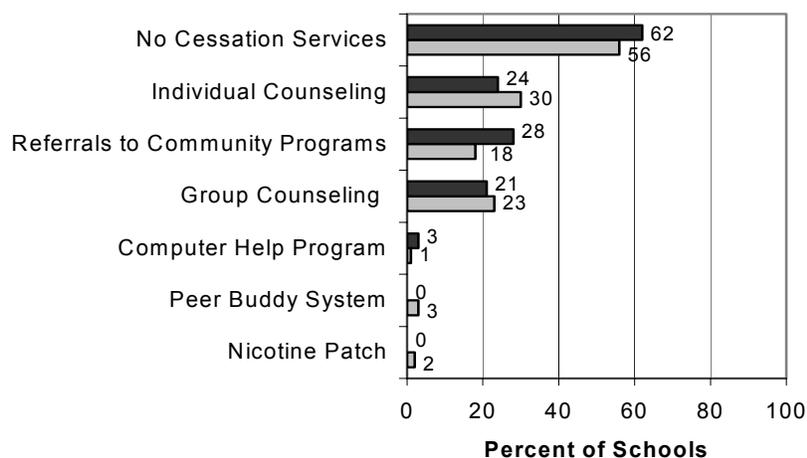
1. ATOD Intervention Services In and Outside of Schools

We asked respondents about special substance abuse counseling services and cessation programs available for students who had been identified as abusing alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs. Here are the percentages of schools that offered each type of service:

- Percent of schools that offer **in-school** alcohol and illicit drug counseling: 25%
- Percent of schools that **refer** students to outside services for alcohol and illicit drug use problems: 73%
- Percent of schools that offer **tobacco cessation services** or referrals: 43%
- Schools with a **greater number of professional care providers** on staff were significantly **more** likely to offer in-school counseling for alcohol and illicit drugs and tobacco cessation services.

We asked respondents about the specific types of tobacco cessation services available to their students. Although the majority of schools surveyed in 2003 offered no services, public schools are more likely to offer tobacco cessation services to their students than private schools. The figure below illustrates the percentage of schools that offer each service.

Tobacco Cessation Services: Public and Private Schools



2. School-Sponsored Extracurricular Groups and Activities

On average, schools in our sample had 4.4 non-classroom student activities with the specific goal of diverting young people from potential drug use. The majority of schools in our sample had at least some of these types of activities. The following table shows the percentage of schools that have each of the activities we surveyed.

Percentages of Schools Conducting Activities in the 2002-2003 School Year

Type of Activity	Percent of Schools
Assemblies or other events about substance use prevention	79%
Red Ribbon Week	69%
Social activities such as alcohol-free prom	64%
Contests about substance use prevention	53%
Public commitments or pledges from students	53%
Special days such as "Great American Smoke-Out"	48%
Student anti-drug use clubs (e.g., SADD)	45%
Activities that involve parents, such as signing a contract to monitor youth parties at their home	27%

The total number of non-classroom student activities that schools offered correlates with their reported level of ATOD problems. In other words, schools that report **higher ATOD problems** report offering **more** non-classroom student activities to try to control these problems.

3. Community-Sponsored Drug-Prevention Groups and Activities

The questionnaire included several items about community-sponsored groups and activities that are available to students. We compared the total number of community-sponsored groups and activities with the total number of school-sponsored activities for schools that are located in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Average Number of School and Community Activities for Rural, Suburban, and Urban Areas

Type of area in which school is located	Average number of school activities	Average number of community activities
Rural	4.2	2.1
Suburban	4.5	2.7
Urban	4.2	3.0

Schools in **rural** areas rely primarily on school-sponsored, non-classroom drug prevention activities for students. On the other hand, schools in **urban and suburban** areas are **more** likely to have community-sponsored drug prevention activities available to students as well as school-sponsored, non-classroom drug prevention activities.

4. Required and Multi-Year ATOD Programs

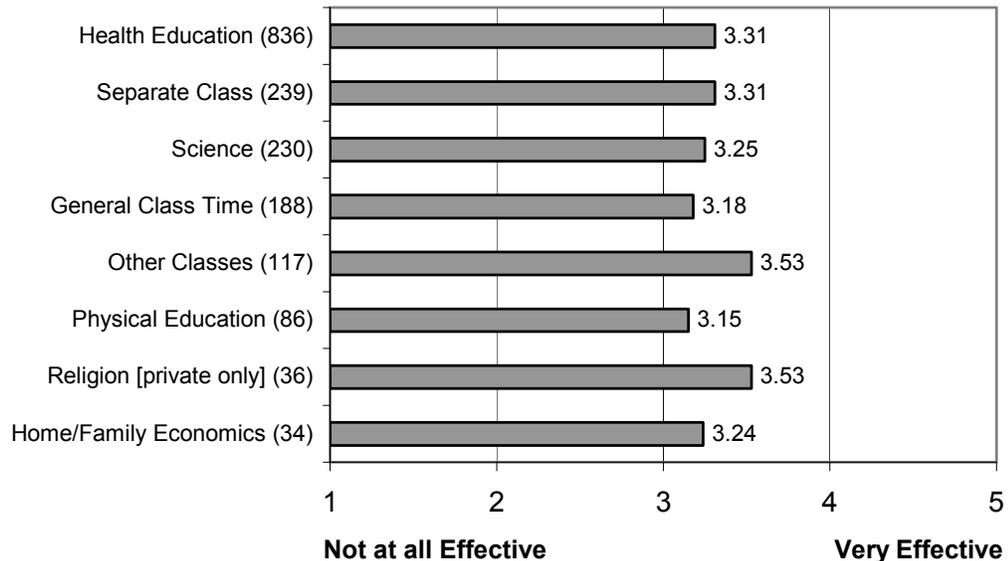
ATOD programs that were **required** for all or most students were rated as significantly **more effective** than non-required programs. Similarly, ATOD programs that students received for **more than one year** while in school were rated as significantly **more effective** than single-year ATOD programs.

5. Types of Classes

The type of class in which ATOD programs were taught **did** seem to have some impact on the perceived effectiveness of the ATOD programs. The following figure illustrates—across the past six years—how ratings differed according to each type of class or category of classes. The order of classes in the following figure reflects where ATOD programs were most commonly taught.

ATOD instruction was most often taught in health education classes, which received moderate ratings of effectiveness.

Reported ATOD Effectiveness Score for Type of Class



Only the “**other classes**” category and **religion** classes received effectiveness ratings that were notably **above** the other types of classes. The “other classes” category included regular courses that did not fit into the common course categories (such as language arts and social studies) and locally developed or unique courses that specifically targeted drug users or adolescent life issues. Although religion classes also received somewhat higher effectiveness ratings in this figure, it should be noted that religion classes had average ratings when compared only to other course ratings for private schools. Private schools rated all classes as somewhat more effective than public schools.

ATOD instruction in **physical education** received some of the **lowest** ratings for perceived effectiveness. In addition, when ATOD instruction was taught in **separate classes** as opposed to within a regular course, administrators did not rank these separate courses as more or less effective.

6. Top Five ATOD Prevention Programs Used

Many schools use locally or state-developed curriculum materials in teaching ATOD prevention to their students rather than packaged, commercially sold programs. In some cases, elements of various commercial programs are combined with locally developed programs. Usually the locally developed programs were used in health education classes. Below is a list of the five most frequently used programs, with the percentage of schools using them listed for each.

<u>Program/Class</u>	<u>Percent of Schools</u>	<u>Grades Usually Taught</u>
Health Education	77%	Grades 7-10
D.A.R.E.	56%	Grades 5-6
Here's Looking at You	4%	Grades 1-7
ALERT (BEST Foundation)	4%	Grades 6-8
Life Skills Training by Gilbert Botvin	3%	Grades 6-8

Perceived Effectiveness of the Top Five ATOD Prevention Programs Used

Health and prevention educators may find it helpful to note how respondents rated the effectiveness of each of these popular programs for reducing substance use among students in their schools.

The following figure shows how respondents rated the effectiveness of these programs on a 5-point scale from “very ineffective” to “very effective.” The average rating is listed for each program. Most respondents seem fairly neutral about the effectiveness of the prevention programs taught in their school.

	Very Ineffective		Neutral		Very Effective	Average Rating (1-5)
Type of Program	1	2	3	4	5	
Here's Looking at You	0%	0%	50%	25%	25%	3.9
ALERT (BEST Foundation)	0%	0%	60%	40%	0%	3.4
Health Education	0%	6%	51%	35%	8%	3.4
D.A.R.E.	2%	11%	52%	26%	9%	3.3
Life Skills Training	0%	25%	25%	50%	0%	3.3

Schools' ATOD Policies and Procedures

Schools in our sample used various policies and procedures to try to reduce student ATOD use. Responses included the following:

- Written ATOD school policies designed to prevent ATOD use at school or at school-related functions
- Drug testing and searches
- Varieties of security measures to keep students safe and help prevent ATOD use
- Consequences for violating school policies

We will describe these measures and their relationship to other school issues in the following sections.

1. Written ATOD School Policies

Clear, concise written policies distributed to students and parents are one means schools have to guide their response to student ATOD use. Almost all the schools in our sample (approximately 99 percent) have written policies regarding substance use.

Not only do most schools have written policies, but these policies seem to include clear details about what is not permitted, consequences for violating ATOD policies, and even guidelines for searching student property for the presence of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Fewer schools include procedures for monitoring compliance in their written ATOD policies.

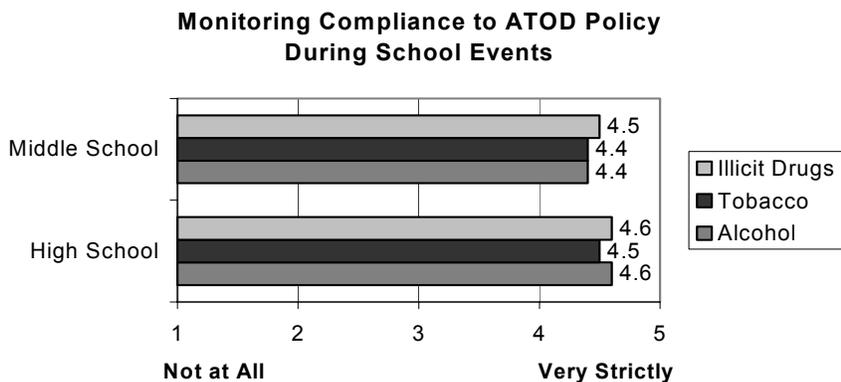
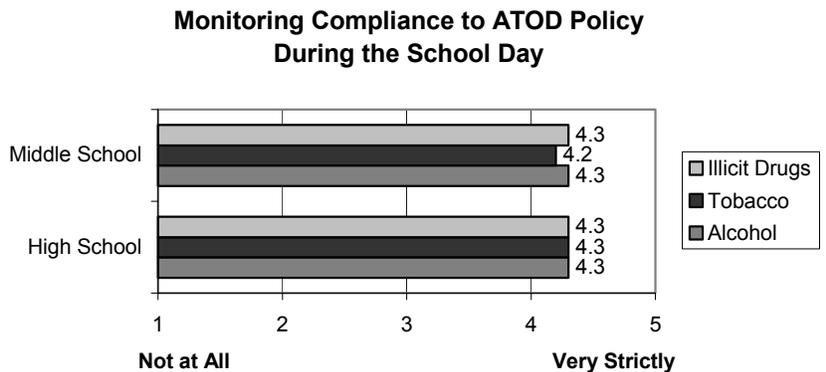
The following table lists the percentages of schools that have particular aspects included in their school's written ATOD policies for each drug. There are almost no policy differences between the various drugs.

Percentages of Schools That Have Particular Items Listed in Written Policies

	Alcohol	Tobacco	Illicit Drugs
Consequences of violating rules	100%	99%	100%
Descriptions of what is against rules	99%	99%	99%
Procedures for handling violations of ATOD policy	99%	97%	98%
Guidelines for search of student property	84%	83%	83%
Procedures for monitoring compliance	76%	76%	78%

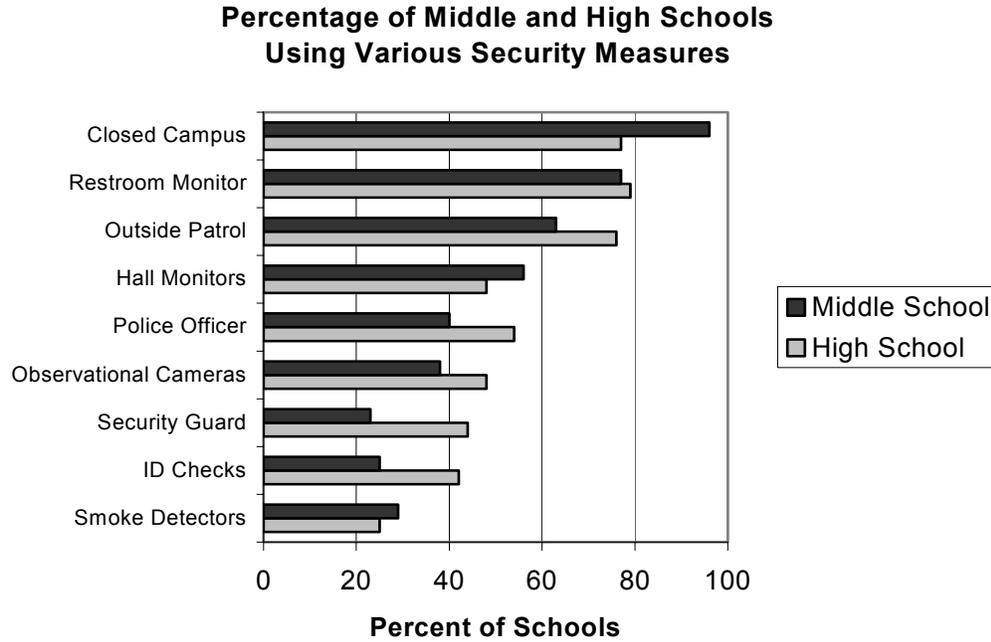
2. School Monitoring of Compliance With the ATOD Policies

We asked respondents to consider their school ATOD policy and the extent to which student compliance is monitored both during the normal school day and at school-sponsored events. Respondents rated monitoring of compliance on a scale from 1 “not at all” to 5 “very strictly.” Overall, respondents from middle and high schools rated the level of monitoring compliance of ATOD policies during the school day and school events as very high.



3. Security Measures

The following figure shows the percentages of middle and high schools that have each security measure.



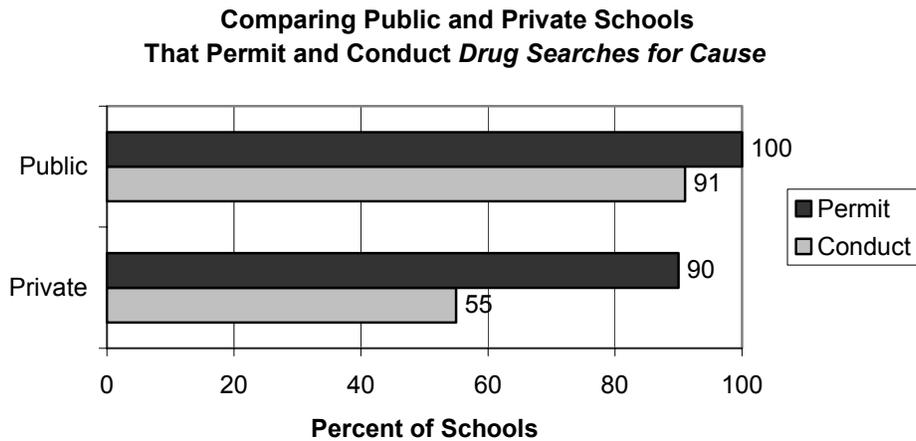
Security measures are commonly used in schools. Four security measures were used by at least half of our sample schools: closed campus, monitoring of student restrooms, patrolling of outside areas by school staff, and monitoring of hallways.

4. Drug Searches

In this section, we compare public and private schools' use of searches based on cause and random drug searches. As stated earlier, while most schools permitted searches of students, fewer schools actually conducted these searches in each of the past six years of our study.

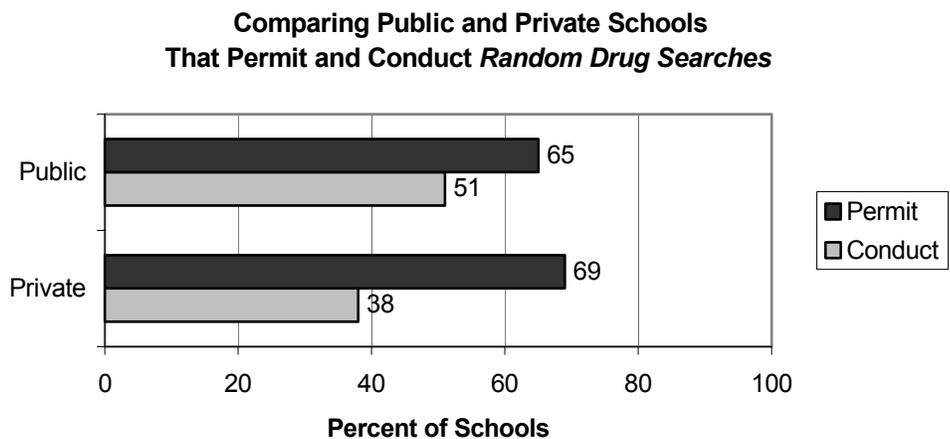
Comparisons of Public and Private Schools Conducting Drug Searches for Cause

The figure below shows that public schools were slightly more likely than private schools to **permit** searches for cause, and much more likely to **conduct** them. Public schools, overall, tend to report more problems with student ATOD use, which may help to explain the significant difference in the number of schools searching for cause.



Comparisons of Public and Private Schools Conducting Random Drug Searches

No significant difference was found between the percentages of public and private schools that **permitted** random drug searches. However, public schools were **more likely** than private schools to conduct random drug searches.



5. Drug Testing

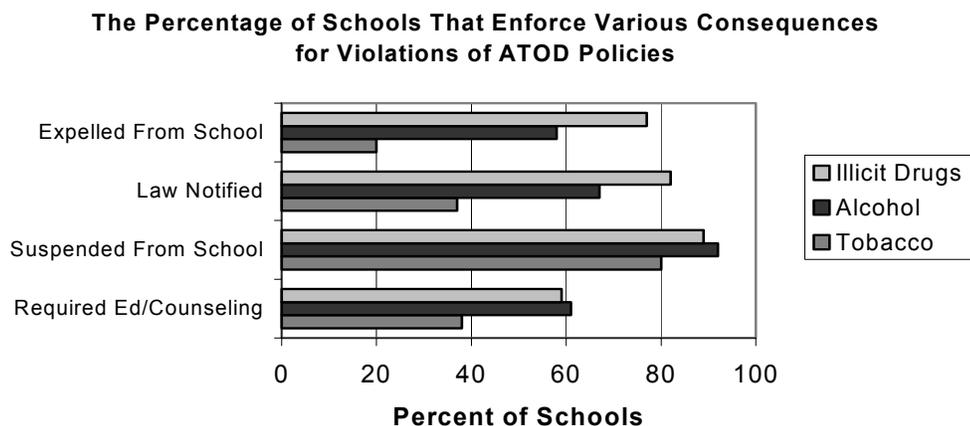
Drug testing is still not a common practice in schools across the country. The table below shows the number of the schools that tested particular student groups in 2003. The percentages are based on the 2003 survey, in which 31 schools (or 19%) said they did any type of drug testing of students. (Some schools test more than one group of students.)

Groups Tested	Percent and Number of Schools Testing
Students based on suspicion or cause	14% (n = 23)
Students on an athletic team	8% (n = 12)
Students who volunteered for testing	6% (n = 9)
Students in other extracurricular activities	4% (n = 7)
Students on school probation	4% (n = 7)
Students randomly selected from among all students	<1% (n = 1)

6. Consequences for Violating the School Drug Policies

Our respondents listed the consequences that occurred at their school when students were caught in violation of the school’s ATOD policy. In general, actions taken for students caught using alcohol or illicit drugs were more severe than if they were caught using tobacco. The majority of schools in the sample do suspend students from school for using tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs. By “suspended from school,” we mean that the student may not attend school for a specified period of time. Suspension does not include detention or in-school suspension. Many also expel students for alcohol and illicit drug use. By “expelled from school,” we mean that the student may no longer attend the school.

The following figure shows the percentage of schools that enforce these consequences for violating their tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use policies (whether it is the first, second, or third violation).



Comparisons of Public and Private Schools

- Suspension or Expulsion From School

Private schools are more likely to move directly to expelling students for alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use, while public schools are more likely to suspend students for illicit drug violations.

Consequence	Tobacco	Alcohol	Illicit Drugs
Suspension	Public 81%	Public 93%	Public 92%
	Private 76%	Private 86%	Private 76%
	Not significantly different	Not significantly different	*Public significantly more likely to suspend
Expulsion	Public 15%	Public 51%	Public 72%
	Private 45%	Private 93%	Private 97%
	*Private significantly more likely to expel	*Private significantly more likely to expel	*Private significantly more likely to expel

- Notifying Law Enforcement or Requiring Education and Counseling

Public schools are much more likely to notify law enforcement for student alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use violations. In 2003, there were significant differences between public and private schools on requiring counseling and education for student ATOD use violations. But in past years the differences have not been significant.

Consequence	Tobacco	Alcohol	Illicit Drugs
Notify the law	Public 44%	Public 78%	Public 90%
	Private 4%	Private 18%	Private 46%
	*Public significantly more likely to notify law	*Public significantly more likely to notify law	*Public significantly more likely to notify law
Require education and counseling	Public 35%	Public 57%	Public 55%
	Private 48%	Private 79%	Private 79%
	Not significantly different	*Private significantly more likely to require education/counseling	*Private significantly more likely to require education/counseling

Conclusions

As part of the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” schools are required to meet the challenge of creating a safe, drug-free learning environment for all students. School administrators in our study identified alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) prevention as an important issue, yet they also reported that there are critical barriers to implementing effective prevention programs in schools. The majority of respondents reported being impeded by competing demands for teaching other subjects and a lack of time and money to provide proper training for teachers. Nearly a quarter also mentioned the difficulty of even identifying effective programs to adopt.

School factors associated with more ATOD problems included having more school counseling services and professional care providers, the use of smoke detectors and for-cause drug searches, staff smoking, neighborhood drug problems, and other school problems such as poor academics, violence, and gangs. Factors associated with fewer ATOD problems include greater parental involvement, closed campuses, and student monitoring by school staff. Factors that were not related to ATOD problems in school include the following: the use of security measures such as security guards; monitors in the hallway, in the bathrooms, and outside the school building; and random drug searches. Obviously, not all of these relationships reflect a causal association.

Given that providing a safe, drug-free environment is a priority in today’s schools, administrators have multiple ways to deal with ATOD problems. Programs and services available to administrators include personalized ATOD intervention counseling services and referrals, school-sponsored and community-sponsored extracurricular activities, and in-class ATOD prevention programs. Most ATOD prevention programs are taught in health education classes using locally or state-developed curriculum materials. For commercially developed ATOD prevention programs, D.A.R.E. is by far the most common program used in school. School policies to address ATOD problems include written school policies, school monitoring of compliance, various security measures such as drug testing and searches, and consequences for violating school drug policies such as suspensions and expulsions. Not all of these have proven effective, however. Most schools provide clear and concise written policies regarding student substance use, with specific security measures such as hall and restroom monitors and closed campus policies. Schools have a variety of ways to deal with student violations of school rules and policies.

Overall, school administrators do seem flexible in adopting policies and programs to prevent drug use as they face the difficult task of balancing academic achievement with concerns about student health and well-being. Our research suggests that policies such as a closed campus, staff smoking prohibitions, stricter monitoring of student compliance, and encouragement of parental involvement deserve more consideration in schools to help prevent student ATOD use. In addition, the use of required, multi-year prevention programs that are research-based yet address adolescent life issues seems to hold the most promise for preventing and decreasing student ATOD use.