

# Select Components of the Districtwide Safety Initiative: 2005-2006

EA06-179-4

## At a Glance

The 2005-2006 school year was the second year of the Districtwide Safety Initiative. The Initiative is designed to improve school safety. While the entire initiative consists of a minimum of 20 programs involving multiple departments within the district, this year's evaluation focused on three universal components of the initiative. These components included (1) the Gang Response Plan, designed to curtail the impact of criminal street gangs on district campuses; (2) the Drug and Violence Education (DAVE) program, designed to provide students with drug and violence prevention skills through lessons designed by the Texas Education Agency; and (3) the Safe and Civil Schools program, a series of programs designed to improve school safety, enhance classroom management, reduce student tardiness, and foster better school climate. The programs in this series include Foundations, START on Time, and CHAMPs.

### Budget

The 2005-2006 budget for the safety initiative totaled \$299,998. The monies for the program were divided among five departments: Alternative Programs, Counseling Services, Police and Security Services, Professional Development, and Psychological and Social Services. Psychological and Social Services accounted for 37.4%, the largest portion of the funding.

### Gang Response Plan

The Gang Response Plan was in its first year of implementation during 2005-2006. It was implemented at 46 schools across the district. The program had three components: prevention, intervention, and enforcement initiatives.

There were no outcomes to report on this program because the majority of the data

gathered was classified as confidential. Originally, a principal survey to measure administrators' perceptions of the consultants had been scheduled. However, after the survey was administered, because Police and Security Services believed that the data gathered were negatively biased against the consultants, the results were not released to the evaluator for analysis.

### Drug Awareness and Violence Education (DAVE) program

To implement the DAVE program, six specialists from the Safe and Drug Schools department trained physical education teachers at 30 middle and 157 elementary schools across the district to incorporate the DAVE lessons into their existing curricula.

Surveys were developed and delivered to the Safe and Drug Free specialists for distribution to the physical education teachers who had been trained on DAVE. The results showed that 87.8% of the teachers believed that they received appropriate training to implement the DAVE curriculum. Almost all respondents (99.4%) indicated that they had delivered DAVE lessons to their students. Of those that did not implement the curriculum, the main obstacle to implementation was that they were responsible for TAKS tutoring. In general, most of the respondents believed that the DAVE program was a quality program. However, some respondents indicated they did not know if the lessons helped students develop skills to resist drugs and violence (13.9%) or would reduce drug use and violence in school (22.9%)

### Safe and Civil Schools

Safe and Civil Schools was the largest component of the evaluation this year. It is a

series of three programs. The main program, Foundations, emphasized data-driven decision-making. The Foundations program was implemented across 31 schools. Cohort I, which included 16 secondary schools, entered the program in 2004-2005. Cohort II, included 15 schools, and they began participating in the program in 2005-2006. CHAMPs is the second program, and it addresses improving classroom management. The third program is START on Time, which strives to reduce student tardiness. This year, Foundations and START on Time were evaluated together.

### **Foundations/ START on Time**

In order to prepare for implementation and remain up to date on successful strategies, teams of teachers and administrators from the 31 schools in the Foundations program attended a series of two-day training sessions. Consultants from Teaching Strategies, Inc., developers of Safe and Civil Schools, facilitated the training and provided the participants time within the training sessions to work on their campuses' specific improvement plans. In order to determine what goals to target in their improvement plans, the Cohort II schools surveyed students and staff about safety, school climate, and student and staff behaviors prior to implementation. They also observed common areas, such as cafeterias, hallways and stairwells, and examined data on disciplinary referrals.

The results of the pre-implementation student and staff surveys administered by Cohort II campuses identified restrooms, campus parking lots, and walking to and from schools as time when students felt least safe.

### **Foundations/START on Time Program Perception**

Perception surveys were also administered to campus personnel from principal to custodian after the program had been implemented. The results showed that the majority of staff believed their campus had implemented the START on Time program. However, staff members were not sure whether the START on Time program had the intended effect of reducing tardiness. Slightly more than half believed that there was adequate supervision of hallways during pass periods, but less than half believed that the pass periods were more orderly now since the

Foundations had been implemented in their school. Most staff indicated that they had not observed or perceived significant changes in their schools' climate as a result of the Foundations program. Less than half of those responding found the Foundations training sessions beneficial.

A Foundations team member survey was also administered. It revealed that the majority of team members believed the Foundations training sessions were useful and gave practical ideas. Three-quarters of respondents believed that the Foundations teams functioned effectively and had members who were actively involved in the team. Eighty percent believed that their teams were consistent in attending Foundations training and conveying what they had learned back to the school staff, but only 55% believed the team effectively communicated information about Foundations to students and parents. Overall, 83% of respondents believed that the Foundations program was effective in improving safety and civility in their schools.

### **Foundations Outcomes**

Overall, the Foundations schools showed dramatic increases in lower-level offenses over the previous school year. More vigorous and consistent enforcement of school standards may explain much of this increase. Higher level offenses, which do not allow administrator discretion in the assignment of punishment, did not show a similar increase in number.

### **CHAMPs**

This year over 3,187 teachers and 141 central staff personnel attended CHAMPs training. The goal for 2005-2006 had been to train 1,900 teachers; it was exceeded by 1,287 teachers.

A CHAMPs survey was administered in May 2006 to all teachers who were trained. The results showed that only 59% believed that CHAMPs training provided new ideas for improving classroom management. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they were actively implementing CHAMPs procedures in their classrooms, but only 43.3% believed that CHAMPs procedures were effective in improving student behaviors.