

Overview of school-based programming

The evaluation of school-based programming was developed in response to interest on the part of P&I grantees and the DHS Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division to understand how the curricula were being implemented in schools and issues of fidelity. Fidelity refers to the practice of implementing a program, curriculum, or activity in the way it was originally designed. This information seemed particularly important to grantees who spend a substantial amount of time and effort coordinating these components with teachers and school staff.

To assess fidelity and implementation challenges, the evaluation focuses on collecting three types of information from teachers: a) student and parent attendance and demographic data, b) fidelity to the core elements of the curricula, and c) perceptions of program implementation and impact. This information will be collected about the four primary curricula being implemented in schools through the Minnesota ATOD prevention project: Slick Tracy, Amazing Alternatives, Power Lines, and Class Action.

Because these curricula are evidence-based and research has demonstrated positive outcomes for youth participating in these programs when they are implemented with fidelity, our evaluation is primarily limited to the assessment of fidelity. Once fidelity is attained, the research suggests youth will achieve the same positive outcomes previously documented in the literature, such as delayed onset of alcohol use or fewer AOD-related problems among young people who use substances. This approach reduces the need for the collection of outcome data, simplifying the overall evaluation plan.

Summary of evaluation measures

Following the solicitation of input and feedback from P&I grantees and DHS-ADAD, the following tools were developed for use by teachers. Each measure was designed to collect concise yet meaningful data that will contribute to enhancing the implementation of these curricula.

- Daily attendance logs. The *optional* logs will be used to document student attendance in class, distribution of curriculum-related materials, and demographic data for students. Use of these logs should assist with the accurate collection and reporting of these data in MDS.
- Implementation checklists. Checklists will allow teachers to identify components of the curriculum that are working well and which pose implementation challenges.

- Classroom observations. P&Is will have the opportunity to observe a class session with each teacher to further assess how closely the curriculum is being implemented as intended by the developers.

In addition, other supplementary materials have been developed to facilitate successful implementation of this evaluation. These include:

- Letter of instruction for teachers. A sample letter is available to send to teachers that details their role and responsibilities related to each data collection component.
- Data collection tracking file. A spreadsheet is available to track the dates materials were sent to and received from teachers. This file may be especially useful when working with several teachers.

See the remainder of this section for copies of each of these materials and protocols that describe their use in detail. Please contact Kristin Dillon (kristin.dillon@wilder.org or 651-280-2656) if you have questions about any of these components.