

SAPP Network News

October 2005

Welcome Back

I'd like to start this newsletter out as usual - the general greeting, the wishes for a great school year ahead, etc. But gosh, I just can't contain myself! I'm exuberant, happy, re-energized, and, heck, I am downright hopeful! We, the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, received a federal grant in the amount of \$489,000! That's 1.5 million spread out over a three-year period and to focus on reducing substance abuse in high schools. We in the field of education are used to hearing about budget cuts. But budget increases? It's time to celebrate!

We owe a huge thank you to Bee Wallace, our BVSD grant writer, who kept her pen to the paper throughout Spring break to complete the application. I also had the great pleasure of working with the wonderful staff and administration at Fairview High School to create the Fairview Pilot program, a research-based project that is at the heart of the grant. Yet another thank you goes out to all of us (I mean you, you, and you!) helping to build a strong overall program. Based on support from Boulder County Public Health, Boulder County Prevention Connection, Compass House, and Parent Engagement Network, The Federal Department of Education funded our project.

Take a look at some of the main components of the grant:

Use of Freshman Seminar to deliver a research-based substance use prevention curriculum to be delivered by peers and a mentor teacher.

Social norming projects at each participating school. This approach has been shown to be effective in colleges and high schools across the US. At Fort Collins High School, student drinking and driving decreased by 30 percent via social norming. In short, social norming is a student-led "marketing strategy" which corrects the common misperception that the majority of their peers abuse substances. Statistics show it's a minority.

Support for parent involvement, which includes training for PEN leaders and Parent LINKS leaders, expansion of parent corps training, money for speakers, stipends for parents leading PEN efforts at schools, and operating expenses for PEN.

Student leadership training for targeted populations, including Latino, LGBTQ, and other Youth of Color.

Families and Schools Together (FAST) program as early intervention. Five BVSD schools will implement this SAMSHA model program which has proven to reduce substance abuse.

Extra duty pay for teachers to participate in climate committee, develop freshman seminar curriculum, and provide site based support with social norming.

School climate liaisons to address health disparities in youth risk behavior.

Support for and expansion of school interventionists. Two new FTE at each school will track substance abuse cases, participate in climate teams, and assist with school efforts.

Staff Development on warning signs of substance use.

Funding for alcohol and drug free activities at the high schools.

The Substance Abuse grant will free up some Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools money, which may be used to supplement and implement our Health curriculum.

Some (sad?) news: no SAPP retreat this year. It seemed interest was waning, and we thought we had lack of funding. However, we will offer school teams a sub day for planning climate activities for the year. Safe and Drug Free Schools will provide lunch and technical assistance, if needed. Let us know if you miss the SAPP retreat. If there's enough response, we'll bring it back by popular demand next year!

We'll continue our suicide prevention efforts through a partnership with CU. Also, the Colorado Trust awarded us a \$50,000 grant to be distributed over three years. It will go toward our ongoing Bully Proofing Your School program at the middle level.

I'm proud and excited. Together, we have built a substantial, strong, and effective program that will help our students grow emotionally and socially, allowing them to put their best selves into their academics. The ancient Greeks called it Arete: the perfection of body, mind and spirit. The Greek "gymnasium" (the first academic school) strove for Arete thousands of years ago. I'm thrilled that we, the Boulder Valley Schools SAPP program, can play an active role in continuing the tradition of general and holistic excellence for our students.

Heartfelt thanks for your continued support of our office. We have a great year ahead of us.

Lisa Cech