

# Research Précis

Edition 05 – 1

Spring 2008

## Best Practices: Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities

Creating a better tomorrow...

### Title: Project ALERT

#### Overview:

*Project ALERT* is a one- to two-year drug prevention program designed to prevent adolescents from beginning drug use, prevent those who have experimented from becoming regular users, and curb risk factors influencing drug use.

*Targeted Ages/Grade Levels:* Grades 6-8

*Extent/Duration of Program:* The program consists of 11 lessons at grade 6 or 7, followed by three lessons 12 months later.

#### Program Costs:

- Each full curriculum package, including 14 lesson plans, 8 videos, and posters, is \$150.
- Online training and help line free with each curriculum package; on-site training (one day) free with purchase of 25 or more packages.

#### For further information, or to order:

Project ALERT  
725 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1825  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Phone: 213-623-0580 (800-253-7810)  
Fax: 213-623-0585

E-mail: [info@projectalert.best.org](mailto:info@projectalert.best.org)

Web site: <http://www.projectalert.best.org>

*Principles/Approaches/Components:* *Project ALERT* is based on the premise that the causes of drug use are primarily social in nature—pro-drug messages and models presented by peers, adults, and the media—and that identifying these pressures and exposing false beliefs will strengthen students' resistance. The program components focus on motivating adolescents against drug use, teaching them the skills and strategies they need to resist pro-drug messages, and establishing expectations or norms for non-use. The program features activities involving peer interaction, role-play, parent-child interaction and discussion, and video reinforcement that models appropriate behavior.

*Evidence-based Effectiveness:* An extensive study of the original program was conducted from 1984-86, with a follow-up in 1993, and of the revised curriculum from 1997-99. Both studies encompassed numerous schools and explored effects on widely diverse populations of students. Overall, findings indicated post-treatment differences between students in experimental and control groups regarding their beliefs related to marijuana, cigarette, and alcohol use. In terms of actual use, findings from both studies indicated a substantial reduction in initiation for students who began the program as non-users as well as for those who were experienced at the time of treatment. Results were equally positive among all demographic groups, more encouraging among those students who were considered at moderate risk, more pronounced in reduction of marijuana and cigarette use than alcohol, and all tending to gradually fade as students progressed through high school.

**Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) connections:**

- A.i - Activities that address the consequences of violence and the illegal use of drugs.
- A.ii - Activities that promote a sense of individual responsibility.
- A.iv - Activities that teach students to recognize social and peer pressure to use drugs illegally and the skills for resisting illegal drug use.

**National Standards connections:**

*Grades 6 through 8*

Health Education Standard 1 – Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Health Education Standard 2 – Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology and other factors on health behaviors.

Health Education Standard 7 – Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

*National Health Education Standards, Second Edition: Achieving Excellence. American Cancer Society, 2007.*

Counseling: Personal and Social Development Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Counseling: Personal and Social Development Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

*ASCA National Standards for Students. American School Counselor Association, 2004.*

**Recognition and additional reports:**

The following organizations/institutions have recognized *Project ALERT*. The organizations are in alphabetical order and the status of the recognition is in parentheses.

- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (Exemplary Program)
- National Association of State and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (Exemplary Program)
- National Prevention Network (Exemplary Program)
- Promising Practices Network (Proven Program)
- SAMHSA (Model Program)
- U.S. Department of Education (Exemplary Program)
- White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (Exemplary Program)

**GENERAL NOTES:** The information in this research précis was originally synthesized by Designed Instruction, LLC as an SDFSC Best Practices Brief for the Kansas State Department of Education. The intent of the revised, nationally correlated version is to serve a wider range of teachers and school administrators dedicated to helping reduce violence and substance abuse. The information was current as of September 2006. Details pertaining to status of program recognition, further research and findings, program costs, and contact addresses and numbers are subject to change.

Correlations to the Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) federally approved activities and to national education standards have been limited in depth (“standard” level only) and breadth (number of standards and subjects) due to the encompassing nature of many programs that typically qualify as model or exemplary. The correlations listed should not be viewed as exhaustive.

**DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENT:** Designed Instruction, LLC does not officially endorse resources and information available through this document or otherwise provided in Web pages devoted to Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities other than those links that lead to resources wholly developed by Designed Instruction and solely distributed on the Designed Instruction Web site.