

Research Précis

Edition 05 – 3

Spring 2008

Best Practices: Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities

Creating a better tomorrow...

Title: G.R.E.A.T.

Overview:

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) is a multi-level program designed to prevent delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership through formal collaboration between local education and law enforcement agencies.

Targeted Ages/Grade Levels: Grade 7 (additional materials at grades 4-5)

Extent/Duration of Program: The program core consists of 13 different 45- to 60-minute lessons at middle school (preferably one per consecutive week at grade 7), but also includes six 30- to 45-minute sessions at grade 4 or 5, a summer program, and a family program for youth ages 10-14.

Program Costs:

- Funding for local agencies to implement the program is available through grants from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance.
- A 40-hour training for experienced and 80-hour training program for inexperienced police officers is available, as well as a two-day training for those leading families programs.

For further information, or to order:

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Principles/Approaches/Components: G.R.E.A.T. is based on the premise that teaching students the consequences of gang involvement along with life skills and problem solving techniques will result in a reduction of gang activity, delinquent behavior, and violence. The program components focus on classroom lessons facilitated by trained law enforcement officers, family involvement, and reinforcement resulting from alignment and extension of the objectives of the elementary D.A.R.E. program as well as informal social interaction and incentives (e.g., sponsored dances, etc.). The program features activities that involve active participation, positive behavior rehearsal, and cooperative and interactive learning techniques.

Evidence-based Effectiveness: Findings from a 1999 retrospective study involving students in grade 8 at 11 sites where the program had been implemented during the previous two years revealed reduced drug use, delinquency across offenses, and minor offenses (e.g., drinking, theft, fighting) for students who did participate in G.R.E.A.T. as opposed to those who did not. Findings from a 2001 study involving six cities (sites) likewise indicated, though marginally, a lower likelihood that students who had participated in the program would at a later date be involved in delinquent behavior. Neither study revealed significant differences between outcomes for students in various demographic groups.

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

A.iv - Activities that teach students to recognize social and peer pressure to use drugs illegally and the skills for resisting illegal drug use.

B - Activities that involve families, community sectors, and a variety of drug and violence prevention providers in setting clear expectations against violence and illegal use of drugs and appropriate consequences for violence and illegal use of drugs.

E.i - Community-wide planning and organizing activities to reduce violence and illegal drug use, which may include gang activity prevention.

National Standards connections:

Grade 7

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

Health Education Standard 5 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Health Education Standard 6 – Students will Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

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 A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

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 *G.R.E.R.T.* The organizations are in alphabetical order and the status of the recognition is in parentheses.

Promising Practices Network (Promising Program)

U.S. Conference of Mayors Research/Education Foundation (Best Practice in Policing in Gang Intervention and Gang Violence Prevention)

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.