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# **Substance Use Among Youths at High Risk of Dropping Out: Grades 7-12 in Texas, 1992**

by  
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# Substance Use Among Youths at High Risk of Dropping Out: Grades 7-12 in Texas, 1992

The Texas School Survey has monitored trends in substance abuse among in-school students biannually since 1988. However, the prevalence rates of substance use for dropouts are unknown and have never been measured in the state. It has been suggested that the dropouts may be fairly similar to the students with high rates of absenteeism. The students who had 10 or more days of absences in the past year prior to the survey are at increased or high risk of dropping out of school. The goal of this paper is to examine the Texas secondary students at high risk of dropping out in 1992 to understand the trends and patterns of their substance use. These potential dropouts face tremendous environmental, social, and familial complications that put them at high risk for developing tobacco, alcohol, and other drug problems. It is estimated that among the students at high risk of dropping out, 87 percent have drunk alcohol in their lifetimes compared to 76 percent of all Texas secondary students; 70 percent have used tobacco compared to 54 percent of the larger group; and 34 percent have used inhalants during their lifetimes compared to 23 percent of the larger group. Regarding illicit substances, 40 percent of the high-risk students have used marijuana and 13 percent have used cocaine/crack during their lifetimes as compared to 20 percent and 5 percent for all secondary students in Texas in 1992.

## Introduction

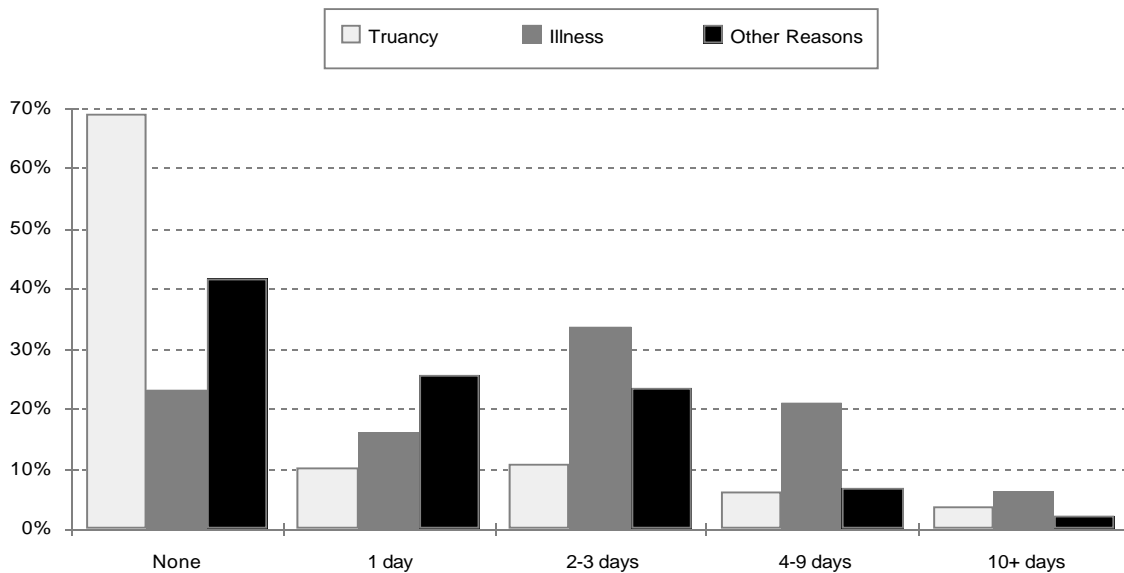
The purposes of this study are to assess the substance use by 6,724 youths in grades 7-12 who are at high risk of dropping out of school, and to explore the differences of substance use between those high-risk students and the other secondary students. This study uses data from the 1992 Texas School Survey which was conducted by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University. The total survey sample consisted of 73,073 secondary school students: 48 percent were males and 52 percent females; 40 percent were White, 21 percent African American, 34 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent were of other races or ethnicities. Students were selected randomly from school districts throughout the state using a multistage probability design. The procedure ensures that students living in metropolitan

and rural areas of Texas are proportionately represented in the final estimates.

The students at high risk of dropping out were identified by three questions which asked about the students' number of days of absence from school in the past year (1) because the student skipped or cut class; (2) because of illness; or (3) because of other reasons. Figure 1 shows the percentage of secondary students who missed school by type of absence and number of days (Appendix A).

The 1992 survey found students are most likely to be absent because of illness. For example, 21 percent of all students reported missing school due to illness between 4 and 9 days during the past year, compared to 6 percent who reported truancy and 7 percent who reported being absent for some other reason. In this study, the

**Figure 1. Percent of Secondary Students Who Missed School in the Past Year by Type of Absence and Number of Days - 1992**



subsample of 6,724 students at high risk of dropping out are defined as those students absent for 10 or more days during the past school year for any of the three reasons given above.<sup>1</sup>

A series of bivariate analyses are presented to explore whether the students at high risk of dropping out and students not at high risk of dropping out (that is, the remaining 66,349 students) differed in demographic characteristics, school performance, extracurricular activity participation, parental involvement, peer behavior, alcohol- and drug-related social problems, and drinking and drug usage patterns. Chi-square is used as a test of significance for the nominal and ordinal level variables. Then, prevalence rates of substance use for the high-risk youths are described and compared with those for the remaining majority. Some factors closely related to students' substance use (including age of first use, friends who use, perceived availability of substances, perceived danger, and parental attitudes) are presented also. All of the analyses reported here are based on a final weighted sample that provides an unbiased representation of Texas secondary school students.

### **Correlates of High-Risk Status** *Demographic Characteristics*

The youths at high risk of dropping out are significantly more likely to be female, to be Hispanic, to live in other than two-parent households, to be from non-metropolitan areas, to have parents who have not graduated from college, to live in a mobile home or apartment, to have a job, and to be older than the students not at high risk of dropping out. Table 1 shows a comparison of the high-risk students with the non-high-risk students based on a number of demographic factors. Decomposing the overall chi-squares indicates that the two groups of students differ considerably on all major demographic characteristics except for the factor of getting an allowance.

About 58 percent of the high-risk students were females, compared to 51 percent of the other group of students. In terms of ethnicity, 37 percent of the high-risk students were Hispanic in comparison to 34 percent of the non-high-risk students. More than 70 percent of the high-risk students were in higher grades (grades 9-12),<sup>2</sup> whereas 62 percent of the other students were from those grades.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Secondary Students  
1992 Texas School Survey**

Characteristics of Respondents	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=6,724)	Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=66,349)
<b>Gender*</b>		
Male	42.2%	48.6%
Female	57.8%	51.4%
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>		
White	39.8%	40.0%
African American	19.4%	21.4%
Hispanic	37.0%	34.1%
Other	3.7%	4.6%
<b>Grade*</b>		
7	13.3%	19.6%
8	16.0%	18.0%
9	25.2%	19.8%
10	17.4%	16.0%
11	15.1%	14.1%
12	13.0%	12.6%
<b>Family Structure*</b>		
Live with Both Parents	53.2%	62.8%
Other Family Structures	46.8%	37.3%
<b>Population Density*</b>		
Largest Metro Areas	50.1%	53.4%
Rest of State	49.9%	46.6%
<b>Parental Education*</b>		
College	40.6%	46.4%
Not College	59.4%	53.6%
<b>Housing Type*</b>		
Mobile Home	6.8%	5.9%
Apartment/Duplex	17.5%	12.5%
House	75.6%	81.6%
<b>Income</b>		
Have a Job*	26.0%	23.0%
Get an Allowance +	48.0%	47.4%

\* p < .0001 (significance level determined by chi-square statistic)

+ p = .365

Notes: (1) N is the actual sample size.

(2) Percentages are weighted to reflect the actual demographic composition of Texas secondary public schools.

The high-risk students were more likely to live in other than two-parent families (47 percent vs. 37 percent of non-high-risk students), to live in other than the most urban areas (50 percent vs. 47 percent), and to have parents without college degree (59 percent vs. 54 percent). Also, high-risk students were more likely to live in an apartment or mobile home (24 percent vs. 18 percent) and have a working income (26 percent vs. 23 percent).

***School Marks, Extracurricular Activities, and Parental School Attendance***

The students at high risk of dropping out reported significantly lower marks in school when compared with non-high-risk students: 57 percent vs. 74 percent reporting A's and B's, and 4 percent

vs. 1 percent reporting failing grades (Table 2). Students were asked also how long they had lived in their current school district (1 year or less, 2-3 years, 4 years or more). There is a significant difference in the length of time living in the current school district between the two groups of students. Students at high risk of dropping out are more likely to be new residents in the school district. Only 71 percent of high-risk students had lived in the district four or more years, compared to 73 percent of the non-high-risk students.

Significantly fewer high-risk students participate in extracurricular activities. Table 2 shows that about 26 percent of the students at high risk of dropping out do not regularly participate in any extracurricular activity, compared to 17 percent of the other group of students. About

**Table 2. School Marks, Extracurricular Activity Participation, and Parental Attendance at School Events Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=6,724)</b>	<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=66,349)</b>
<b>School Marks *</b>		
As	13.0%	23.8%
Bs	44.4%	50.0%
Cs	32.8%	22.1%
Ds	5.8%	3.2%
Fs	4.0%	0.9%
<b>Years in School District *</b>		
1 Year or Less	14.5%	11.3%
2-3 Years	14.6%	15.5%
4 or More Years	70.9%	73.3%
<b>Number of Extracurricular Activities*</b>		
0	26.4%	17.4%
1	34.0%	31.0%
2	17.3%	23.0%
3 or More	22.3%	28.6%
<b>Parental Attendance at School Events*</b>		
Yes	29.9%	44.2%
No	70.1%	55.8%

\* p < .0001 (significance level determined by chi-square statistic).

Note: N is the actual sample size, and all percentages are weighted.

40 percent of the high-risk students reported that they regularly participated in more than two types of extracurricular activities, whereas 52 percent of the non-high-risk students said so. In regard to parental school attendance, the high-risk youths



**High-risk students are twice as likely as other secondary students to say that most or all of their peers carry weapons, belong to a gang, and wish to drop out of school.**

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are significantly less likely to have their parents to participate in school events. Only 30 percent of the high-risk youths reported that their parents usually attended school-sponsored open houses or PTA meetings, while 44 percent of the non-high-risk youths said so.

***Perception of Safety and Peer Behaviors***

In the survey, students were asked three questions about the relative safety of their home, neighborhood, and school environments. Response categories ranged from “very safe” to “not safe at all.” Table 3 shows that the students at high risk of dropping out are significantly less likely than the non-high-risk students to feel safe when at home, in their neighborhoods, or attending school. About 60 percent, 26 percent, and 27 percent of the high-risk students reported feeling very safe in their homes, neighborhoods, and schools respectively, compared to 68 percent, 30 percent, and 31 percent of the non-high-risk students. For both groups of students, the neighborhoods and schools were rated as much less secure than their homes.

Students also were asked about their immediate peer group’s attitudes and behaviors regarding carrying weapons, belonging to or wanting to belong to a gang, and wishing to drop out of school. Although these questions concern the

students’ friends, it is assumed that the answers may reflect the attitudes and behaviors of the respondents as well. Table 3 shows that significantly more high-risk students have friends with those attitudes and behaviors. For example, the high-risk students are twice as likely to say that most or all of their peers carry weapons, belong to a gang, and wish to drop out of school than the other group of students (20 percent vs. 10 percent, 15 percent vs. 7 percent, and 10 percent vs. 5 percent, respectively).

***Alcohol Use and Alcohol-Related Problems***

Table 4 shows a comparison of heavy-drinking frequency, alcohol-related social problems, and days of attending class while drunk for the two student groups. The students at high risk of dropping out are more likely to have five or more drinks at one time than the other students. About 16 percent of the high-risk students drank five or more drinks per occasion several times a week during the past year, whereas only 6 percent of the not-at-high-risk students reported this same high frequency of heavy drinking. High percentages of the high-risk students also report more incidents of alcohol-related social problems (trouble with friends, dates, or police because of drinking, and driving after drinking too much). For example, 7 percent of the high-risk students had experienced 11 or more incidents of social alcohol-related problems in comparison to less



**About 16 percent of the high-risk students drank five or more drinks per occasion several times a week during the past year, whereas only 6 percent of the not-at-high-risk students reported this same frequency of heavy drinking.**

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than 2 percent of the remaining students. Among the high-risk students, 19 percent went to class while drunk at least one day during the past school year as compared to a rate of 8 percent for

**Table 3. Perception of Safety and Peer Behaviors Among Secondary School Students - 1992**

	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out</b> (N=6,724)	<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out</b> (N=66,349)
<b>Safety in the Home *</b>		
Very Safe	60.1%	68.3%
Somewhat Safe	31.6%	26.7%
Not Very Safe	3.4%	2.1%
Not Safe at All	1.1%	0.5%
Don't Know	3.9%	2.4%
<b>Safety in the Neighborhood *</b>		
Very Safe	26.1%	30.0%
Somewhat Safe	49.0%	49.7%
Not Very Safe	14.3%	13.7%
Not Safe at All	7.9%	3.6%
Don't Know	2.7%	3.1%
<b>Safety at School *</b>		
Very Safe	26.8%	31.4%
Somewhat Safe	46.7%	48.4%
Not Very Safe	15.6%	11.6%
Not Safe at All	7.1%	3.8%
Don't Know	3.8%	4.8%
<b>Friends Carrying Weapons *</b>		
None	30.6%	45.2%
A Few	28.7%	29.0%
Some	20.4%	15.8%
Most	15.0%	7.4%
All	5.3%	2.7%
<b>Friends Belonging to a Gang *</b>		
None	53.3%	64.6%
A Few	20.4%	18.8%
Some	11.9%	9.5%
Most	8.8%	5.1%
All	5.7%	2.0%
<b>Friends Wishing to Drop Out of School *</b>		
None	41.1%	58.3%
A Few	31.3%	27.0%
Some	17.4%	9.8%
Most	5.9%	3.3%
All	4.3%	1.6%

\* p < .0001 (significance level determined by chi-square statistic).

Note: N is the actual sample size, and all percentages are weighted.



**Table 4. Heavy Drinking, Alcohol-Related Social Problems and Class Attendance While Drunk During the Past Year Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=6,724)	Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=66,349)
<b>Frequency - Drank 5 or More Drinks per Occasion*</b>		
Never	35.1%	55.3%
Less than Once a Month	13.8%	16.2%
Several Times a Month	35.5%	22.2%
Several Times a Week	15.6%	6.3%
<b>Number of Times of Alcohol-Related Social Problems#*</b>		
None	65.8%	81.3%
1-10 Times	27.4%	17.2%
11-39 Times	6.0%	1.5%
40+ Times	0.8%	0.0%
<b>Days Attended Class While Drunk *</b>		
None	80.6%	92.2%
1-3 Days	12.6%	6.4%
4-9 Days	3.4%	0.8%
10+ Days	3.4%	0.6%

\* p < .0001 (significance level determined by chi-square statistic)

# Items included:

- (1) Having difficulties of any kind with friends because of drinking;
- (2) Driving a car when you've had a good bit to drink;
- (3) Being criticized by someone you were dating because of drinking;
- (4) Having trouble with the police because of drinking.

the students not at high risk of dropping out. All differences between the two independent student groups are statistically significant.

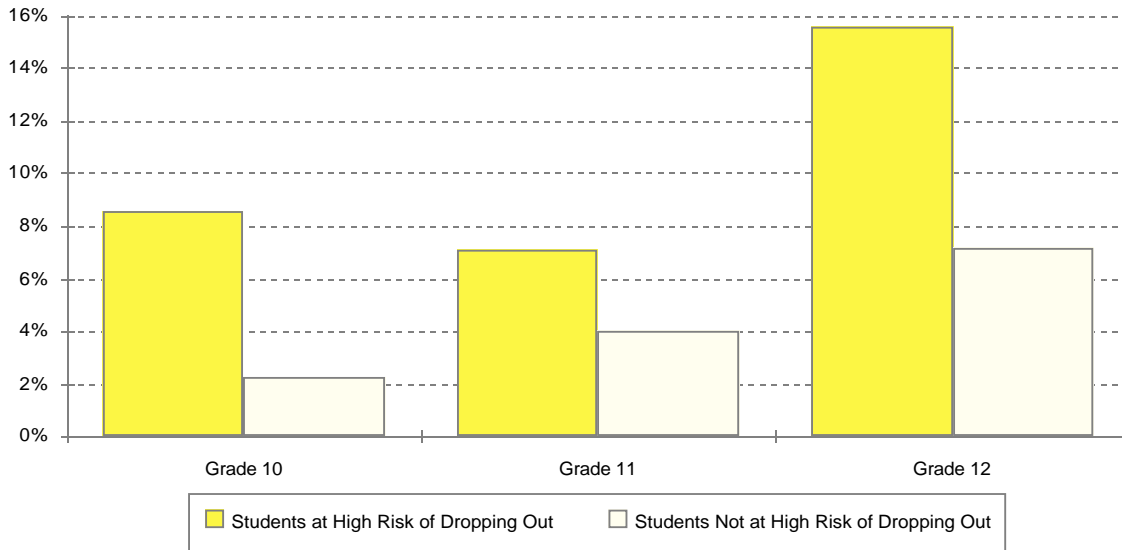
Drunk driving is one of the most disturbing outcomes of alcohol use. Youths at high risk of dropping out of school are more likely to report driving while drunk (Appendix C). For example, 40 percent of the high-risk seniors admitted driving a car "after having a good bit to drink" at least once during the past year, compared to only 25 percent of the non-high-risk seniors. A great number of students have repeated instances of drunk driving. About 16 percent of the high-risk seniors reported driving

while drunk four or more times in the past year, whereas 7 percent of the other seniors had done so at least four times (Figure 2).

### ***Illicit Drug Use and Drug-Related Problems***

Heavy drug use is a more serious phenomenon in the high-risk group than in the other group (Table 5). As many as 8 percent of the high-risk students reported being frequent marijuana users (once a week or more), compared to only 2 percent of the remaining majority. The differences in the frequency of drug-related social problems (trouble with friends, dates, or police because of drug use, and driving when feeling

**Figure 2. Percent of Students Who Drove While Drunk Four or More Times in the Past Year by Grade - 1992**



high from drugs) during the past year were also examined. About 17 percent of the students at high risk of dropping out indicated having one or more times of drug-related social problems in comparison to 6 percent of the non-high-risk students. Table 5 also shows that the high-risk students are five times as likely as the non-high-risk students (5 percent vs. 1 percent) to report attending class while high from illicit drugs on 10 or more days in the past year. All differences between the two independent student groups are significant statistically.

**Prevalence and Recency of Use  
*Students at High Risk of Dropping Out***

The five substances most frequently used by the secondary students at high risk of dropping out were alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, and uppers (Appendix D, Table D1). These were the same five substances most frequently used by all Texas secondary students in 1992, except the order was slightly different—inhalants and marijuana were the third and fourth most frequently used substances by all secondary students (Liu and Fredlund 1993). However, the preva-

lence rates of substance use are much higher among the high-risk youths. For example, 87 percent of the high-risk students had ever drunk alcohol in their lifetime, 70 percent had ever used tobacco, 40 percent had ever used marijuana, 34 percent had ever used inhalants, and 14 percent had ever used uppers, compared to 76 percent, 54 percent, 20 percent, 23 percent, and 7 percent, respectively, for all secondary students. The higher rates of use among the high-risk students remain consistent for all grade levels as well.

Figure 3 presents not only the substances ranked by lifetime prevalence, but the prevalence rates for substances on lifetime, annual, and past-month use among the students at high risk of dropping out. Use of either of the two major legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, remains more widespread than use of any of the illicit drugs. Over 55 percent of the high-risk students are current drinkers (that is, they have consumed alcohol in the past month), and three-fourths are annual drinkers. About 36 percent of the high-risk students reported using tobacco in the past month, and 49 percent in the past year. Marijuana is by far the most widely used illicit drug among

**Table 5. Heavy Drug Use, Drug-Related Social Problems, and Class Attendance While High During the Past Year Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=6,724)</b>	<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out (N=66,349)</b>
<b>Frequency Used Marijuana *</b>		
Never	63.6%	85.6%
Rarely	8.1%	4.8%
Yearly	8.3%	3.0%
Monthly	12.1%	4.7%
Weekly	7.9%	1.9%
<b>Times of Drug-Related Social Problems#*</b>		
None	83.1%	93.9%
1-10 Times	13.1%	5.4%
11-39 Times	3.2%	0.7%
40+ Times	0.6%	0.0%
<b>Days Attended Class While High on Drugs*</b>		
None	83.2%	94.5%
1-3 Days	9.0%	3.8%
4-9 Days	2.8%	0.7%
10+ Days	5.0%	1.0%

\* p< .0001 (significance level determined by chi-square statistic)

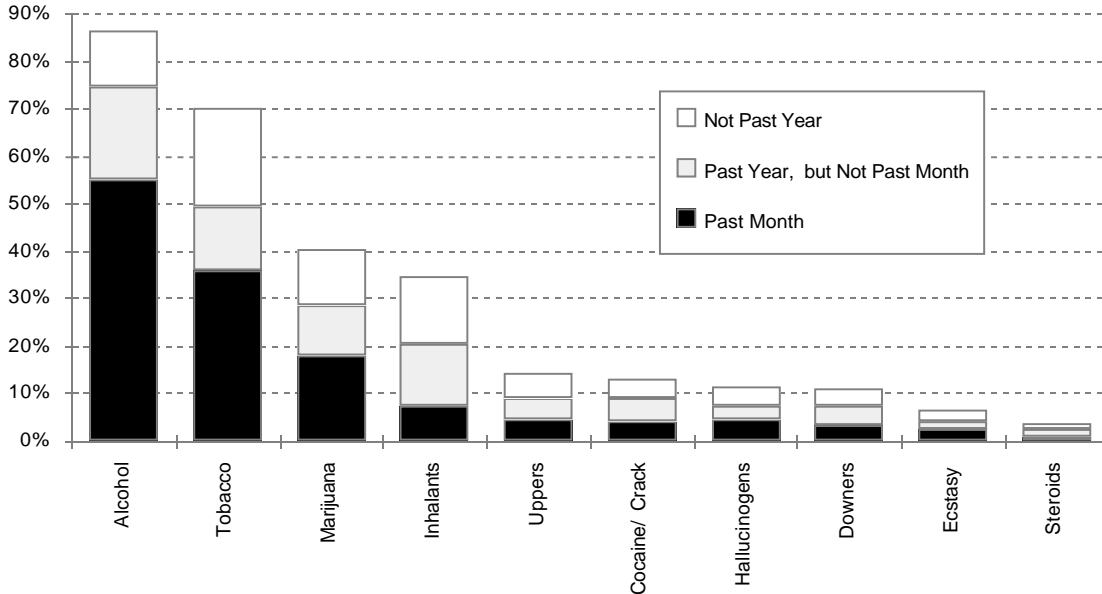
# Items included:

- (1) Having difficulties of any kind with friends because of drug use;
- (2) Driving a car when you've felt high from drugs;
- (3) Being criticized by someone you were dating because of drug use;
- (4) Having trouble with the police because of drug use.

the high-risk students, with 18 percent reporting current (i.e., monthly) use, 28 percent reporting annual use, and 40 percent reporting lifetime use. Uppers are the second most prevalent of the illicit drugs, with a current prevalence rate of 4 percent, an annual prevalence rate of 9 percent, and a lifetime prevalence rate of 14 percent. The next most widely used illicit drug among the high-risk students is cocaine/crack: 4 percent are current users, 9 percent annual users, and 13 percent are lifetime users. Steroids are the least commonly used of the substances, with a current prevalence rate of about 1 percent, an annual prevalence of 2 percent, and a lifetime prevalence of 3 percent.

Students in the upper grades have higher percentages of use for all substances except inhalants when compared to students in lower grades. However, among the students at high risk of dropping out, the pattern of progressive use with increasing grade levels has not been demonstrated. The seventh and eighth graders have the lowest rates. The prevalence rate increases sharply between the eighth and ninth graders, then decreases slightly among the tenth and eleventh graders, and increases again for seniors. Figure 4A shows the lifetime prevalence patterns by grade for tobacco, alcohol, any illicit drug, marijuana, and cocaine/crack. While the high-risk students in

**Figure 3. Prevalence and Recency of Use of Various Substances Among Students at High Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**



grades 9-12 have higher prevalence rates than those in grades 7-8, the ninth and twelfth graders are the two peak points for substance use. For example, the lifetime prevalence of any illicit drug use is about 28 percent for seventh and eighth graders, 56 percent for ninth graders, 51 percent for tenth graders, 48 percent for eleventh graders, and 57 percent for seniors.

Based on a 1993 Texas Education Agency report, the largest percentage of students dropped out of school in the ninth grade.<sup>3</sup> The high dropout rate among the ninth graders might explain why a decrease in the prevalence rate of drug use as shown in Figure 4A occurs between the ninth and tenth grades for students at high risk of dropping out in this study. It appears that some individuals who have used drugs in the ninth grade or earlier have dropped out and are not in school to take the survey in the tenth grade. This explanation is supported by comparing Figures 4A and 4B.

***A Comparison of Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out***

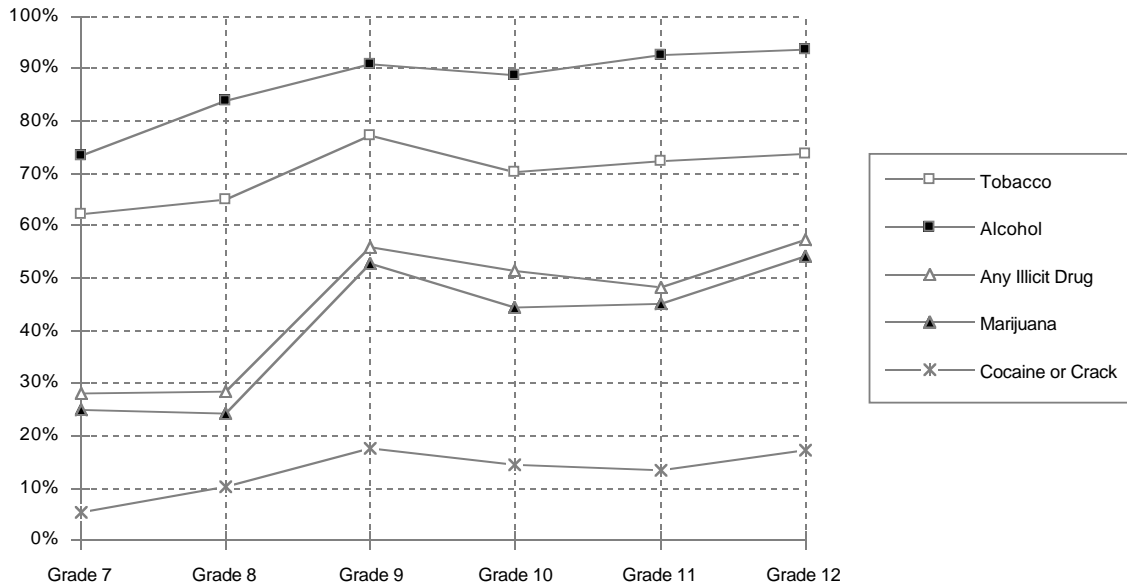
Compared to the students at high risk of dropping out, other youths reported much lower

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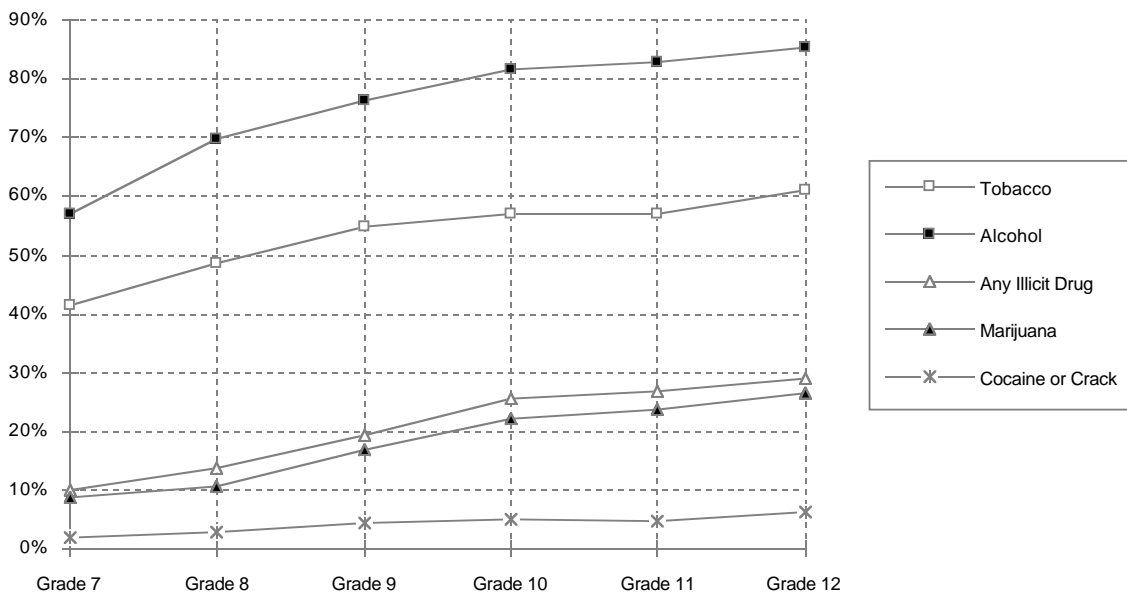
**High-risk students reported about three times as much lifetime and current use of cocaine/crack, hallucinogens, uppers, downers, and ecstasy than non-high-risk students.**

prevalence rates of use for each substance (Appendix D, Table D2). In 1992, the high-risk students reported about three times as much lifetime and current prevalence of cocaine/crack, hallucinogens, uppers, downers, and ecstasy. For example, 13 percent of high-risk youths have ever used cocaine/crack in their lifetimes versus only 4 percent of non-high-risk youths. The current prevalence is 4 percent vs. 1 percent. Figure 5A presents the substantial differences in lifetime use of various substances between the two independent student groups. The students at high risk of dropping out are more likely than the non-high-risk students to have reported using legal drugs in their lifetime: 70 percent vs. 53 percent for tobacco, 87 percent vs. 74 percent for alcohol,

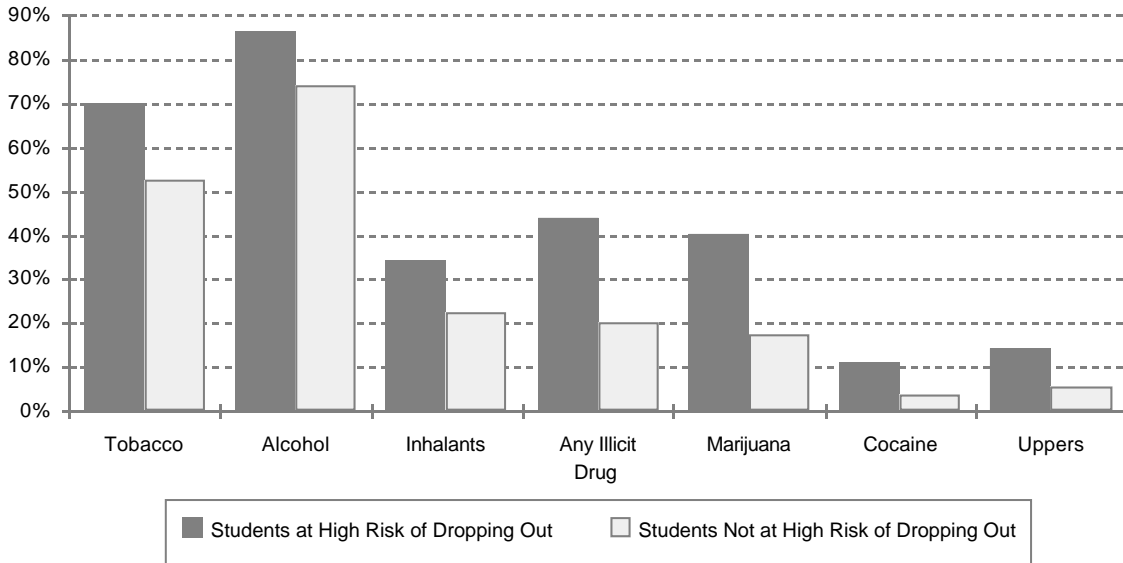
**Figure 4A. Percent of Students at High Risk of Dropping Out Who Have Ever Used Selected Substances by Grade - 1992**



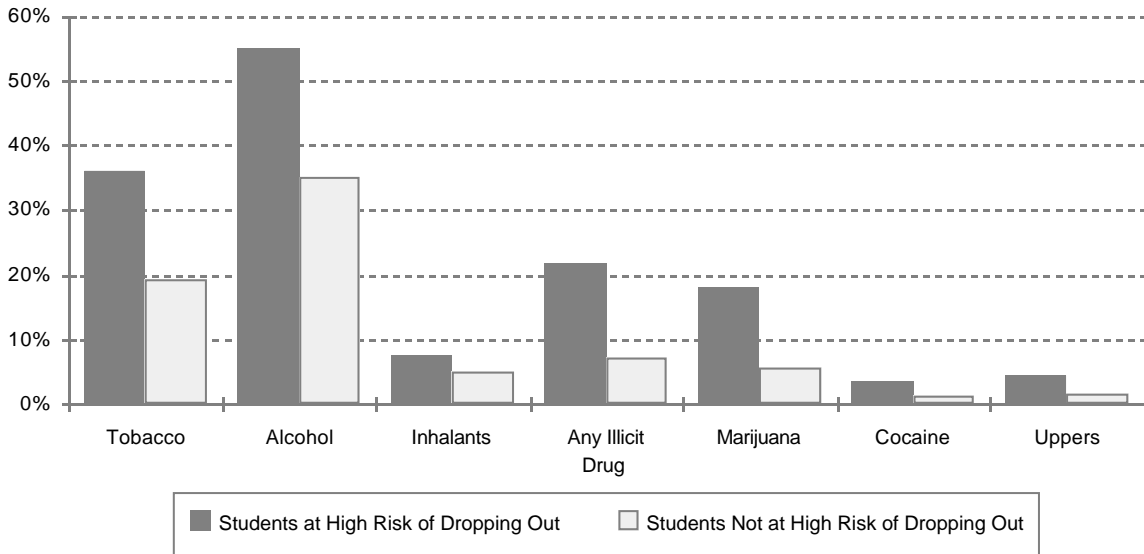
**Figure 4B. Percent of Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out Who Have Ever Used Selected Substances by Grades - 1992**



**Figure 5A. Percent of Secondary Students Who Have Ever Used Selected Substances by Risk Status - 1992**



**Figure 5B. Percent of Secondary Students Who Have Used Selected Substances in the Past Month by Risk Status - 1992**



and 34 percent vs. 22 percent for inhalants. Also, 44 percent of high-risk students reported lifetime use of any illicit drug, compared to 20 percent of the others. Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug. Lifetime prevalence of marijuana use was 40 percent for the high-risk group in 1992 versus 17 percent for the not-at-high-risk group.

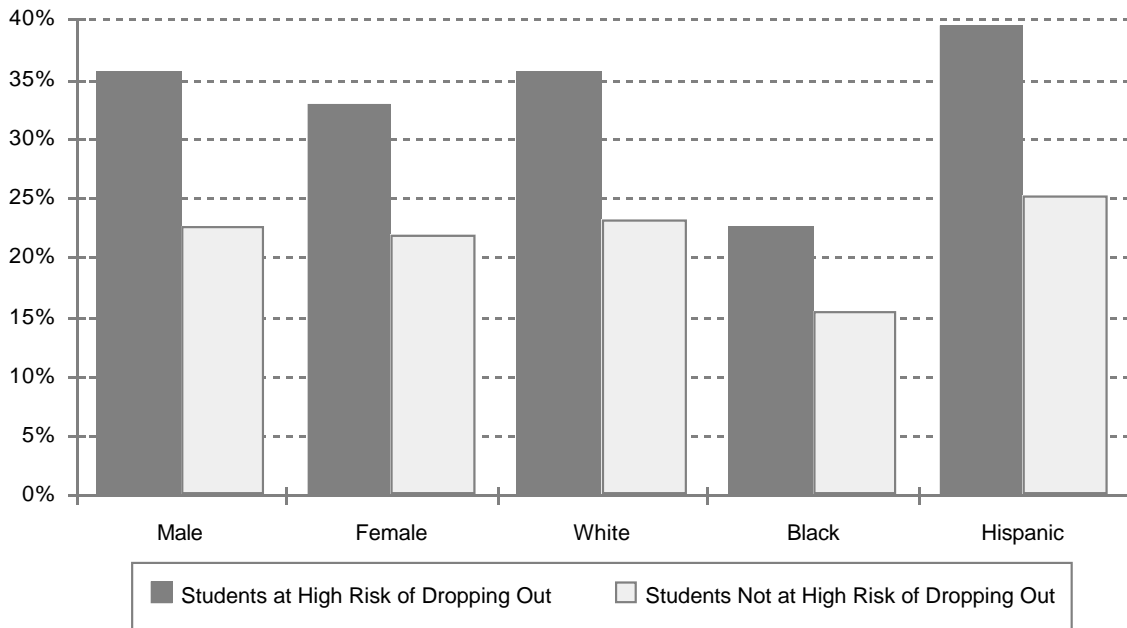
Figure 5B presents the comparison of the current use of various substances. For example, 55 percent of the youths at high risk of dropping out drank alcohol in the past month, compared to 35 percent of the not-at-high-risk youths. Current use of any illicit drug use was much higher among the high-risk students (22 percent) than among the other group of students (7 percent). The high-risk students also reported three times as much current use of marijuana use than those not at high risk of dropping out (18 percent vs. 6 percent).

The grade-level data demonstrate different trends in substance use between the two target groups. As mentioned above, ninth and twelfth graders at high risk of dropping out show the

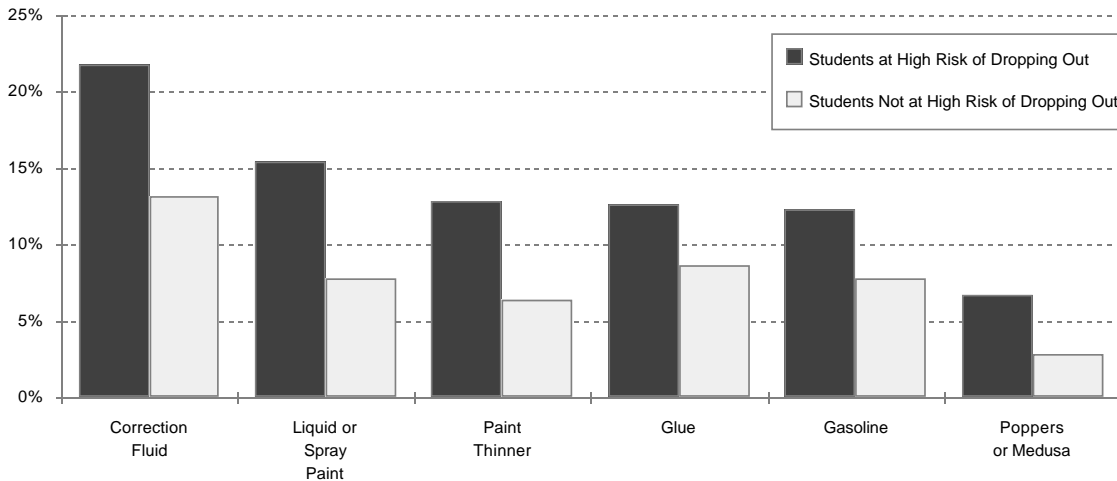
greatest rates of drug use. However, for the non-high-risk students, the students in upper grades show the highest rates and the students in the lower grades the lowest rates for all substances except inhalants. Lifetime use is normally cumulative in that the percentage increases as students get older and report more drug use. For example, Figure 4B shows that the lifetime prevalence of any illicit drug use among the non-high-risk students was 10 percent for seventh graders, 14 percent for eighth graders, 20 percent for ninth graders, 26 percent for tenth graders, 27 percent for eleventh graders, and 29 percent for seniors.

Unlike the patterns of other substances, *inhalant* use is higher in the lower grades and lower in the upper grades. This means that many students who use inhalants in the lower grades are not in school as juniors or seniors, and are not present to report their early use of inhalants. For example, among the students not at high risk of dropping out, the lifetime inhalant use in 1992 was 25-26 percent for seventh and eighth graders, compared to 20 percent for juniors and 17

**Figure 6. Percent of Secondary Students Who Have Ever Used Inhalants by Gender and Ethnicity - 1992**



**Figure 7. Percent of Secondary Students Who Have Ever Used Selected Inhalants - 1992**



percent for seniors. This pattern in lifetime use partially may be due to inhalant users dropping out by the ninth grade before reaching the upper grades. The relationship between use of inhalants and dropping out of school again supports the hypothesis that substance use is associated with the risk of dropping out.

In general, the rates of inhalant use are higher for students at high risk of dropping out, for male students, and for Hispanic students (Figure 6). Among the high-risk students, males are more likely to use inhalants in their lifetime than females (36 percent vs. 33 percent). Yet similar gender patterns, with males having only slightly higher rates of lifetime use of inhalants are found among the not-at-high-risk youths (23 percent males vs. 22 percent females). Overall, Hispanic youths have the highest lifetime rates of inhalant use, followed by White youths and African American youths. Yet the ethnic differences of lifetime inhalant use appear to be more significant among the high-risk students (40 percent, 36 percent, and 23 percent respectively) than among those not at high risk (25 percent, 23 percent, and 15 percent respectively).

Among the specific inhalants, correction fluid is the most frequently reported (Figure 7). About 22 percent of the high-risk youths had ever used correction fluid in 1992, compared to 13 percent of the not-at-high risk youths. The majority of lifetime users have used correction fluid only one or two times (Appendix E). More than 1 percent of the high-risk students had used this type of inhalant 20 or more times, while only 0.5 percent of the other group of students had done so. The second most frequently reported inhalant is liquid/spray paint for high-risk students (15 percent, lifetime use), and glue for not-at-high-risk students (9 percent, lifetime use). The large majority had used these inhalants only one or two times.

The students at high risk of dropping out are more likely to use multiple inhalants. About 24 percent of the high-risk youths had used at least two different kinds of inhalants, compared to 15 percent of the not-at-high-risk youths. In addition, 13 percent of the high-risk students had ever used four or more different types of inhalants, whereas only 7 percent of the other group of students had done so.





**Students at high risk of dropping out are more likely to use multiple inhalants. About 24 percent of the high-risk youths had used at least two different kinds of inhalants compared to 15 percent of other students.**

friends and are involved in environments where drugs are used have better access to substances, see substances as less dangerous, and have experienced a higher rate of substance use.

***Age of First Use***

For both student groups, tobacco, alcohol, and inhalants are the first three substances that they try. Students begin using licit substances earlier than they start using illicit drugs. For example, beginning tobacco use for the high-risk seniors in 1992 occurred at 13.2 years of age, which was about 0.4 years earlier than alcohol use, 0.5 years earlier than inhalant use, 1.4 years earlier than marijuana use, 1.8 years earlier than uppers use, and 2.8 years earlier than cocaine use (Table 6).

**Factors Related to Substance Use**

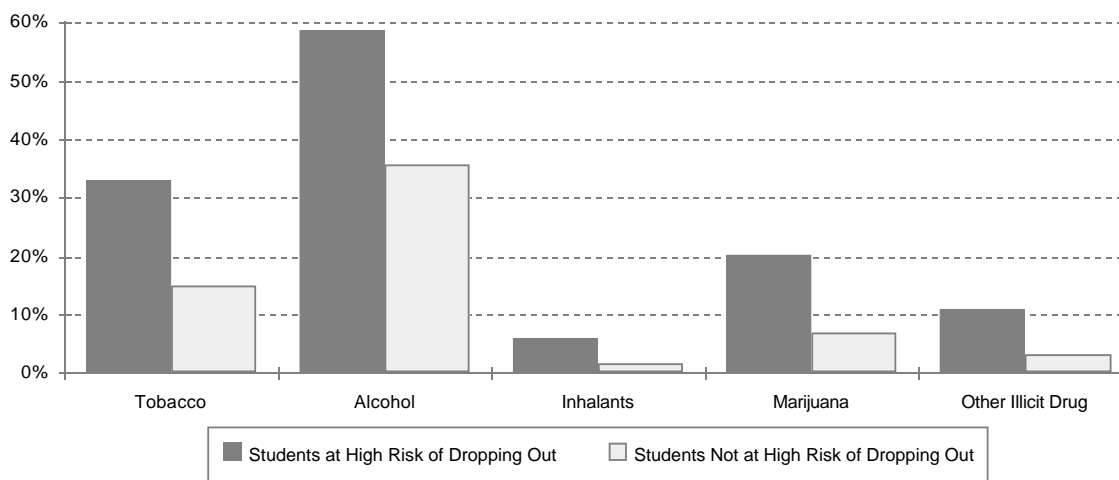
This section presents the role of selected factors in relation to the adolescents' substance use. The age of initial substance use is one of the important factors that can influence substance use behavior. Adolescents are affected also by the number of friends who use, by their own drug-taking attitudes and those of their parents, as well as by the availability of the various substances. It shows that youths at high risk of dropping out are more likely to have most or all of their close friends use substances and report parental approval of drug use. The high-risk students who perceive high levels of drug use among their

The differences in substance use between the high-risk and not-at-high-risk students may result partly from the differences in the average age of first use. Among the ninth and twelfth graders, the initial use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and uppers for high-risk students is earlier than that for other students. For example, the average age of first use of alcohol was 13.6 years of age for high-risk seniors, compared to 14.0 years for the

**Table 6. Average Age of First Use of Substances Among Ninth and Twelfth Graders in Years: Students at High Risk of Dropping Out vs. Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out		Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out	
	Grade 9	Grade 12	Grade 9	Grade 12
Tobacco	12.1	13.2	12.1	13.4
Alcohol	12.0	13.6	12.3	14.0
Inhalants	12.8	13.7	12.5	13.6
Marijuana	13.2	14.6	13.3	14.8
Cocaine	14.2	16.0	14.1	15.7
Crack	13.7	15.6	13.4	15.1
Hallucinogens	13.9	15.6	13.9	15.6
Uppers	13.6	15.0	13.6	15.1

**Figure 8. Percent of Secondary Students Who Say Most/All of Their Close Friends Use Substances - 1992**



remaining seniors. However, the youths at high risk of dropping out start using inhalants, cocaine, and crack later than do the students who are not at high risk. The initiation of cocaine use for high-risk seniors occurred at 16.0 years, while the remaining seniors began using cocaine at 15.7 years.

### ***Friends Who Use***

Students were asked how many of their close friends use substances. The percentage differences in responses regarding peers' substance use between the high-risk and not-at-high-risk students may lead to the differences in substance use. Many more high-risk students said that at least a few of their friends used tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, marijuana, and other illicit drugs. For example, Figure 8 shows that 59 percent of the high-risk youths responded that most or all of their friends drank alcohol, which is a much higher percentage than the 36 percent not-at-high-risk youths who reported that most or all of their friends drank (Appendix F, Table F1). When asked about marijuana, 20 percent of the high-risk students indicated that most or all of their friends used marijuana, compared to only 7 percent of the remaining students who said so.

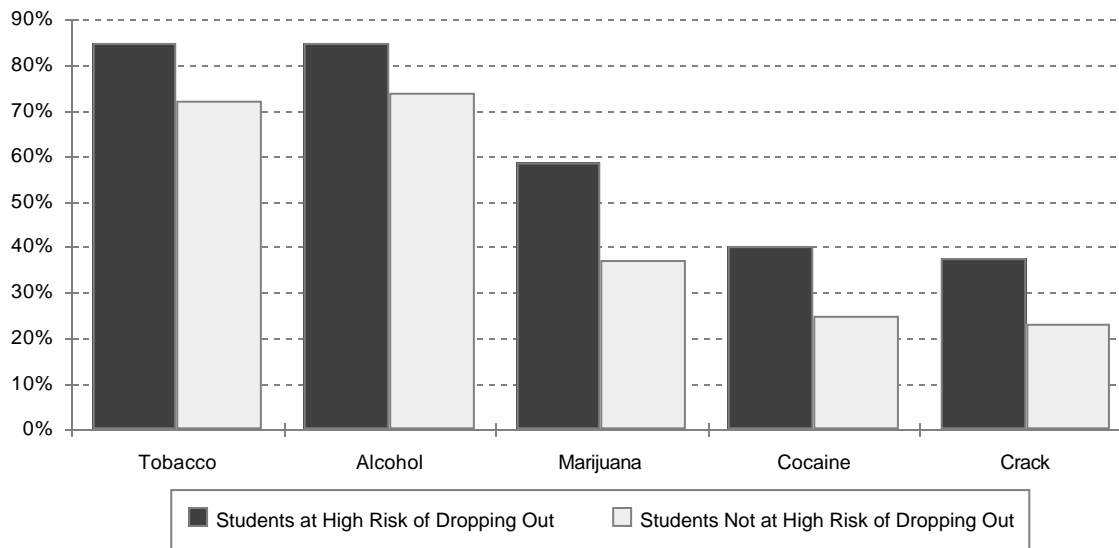
The same pattern holds true for students in different grades.

The relationship between substance use by a student and use by their close friends is examined as well. There is a significant association between their own use and the number of close friends they have who use substances (Appendix F, Table F2). For example, among the high-risk students who have no close friends who drink alcohol, only 7 percent reported alcohol use in the past month; however, among those who reported that most or all of their close friends drink alcohol, 76 percent are current drinkers. Only 1 percent of the high-risk youths who have no friends using any illicit drug actually used some illicit drug during the previous month, compared to 66 percent of those who indicated that most or all of their close friends use illicit drugs. The relationship is consistent for the students who are not at high risk of dropping out, and for other substances. The finding strengthens the importance of peer group in providing opportunities and encouragement for youthful substance use.

### ***Perceived Availability***

Students reported that various substances were readily available if they wanted some. The

**Figure 9: Percent of Secondary Students Who Think Substances Are Very Easy to Get - 1992**



substantial differences in the reported availability of substances between the two independent groups of students may result in the prevalence differences of their substance use. In 1992, more students at high risk of dropping out reported that it would be very easy to get substances if they wanted some than did other students (Figure 9). For example, 85 percent of the high-risk students thought that alcohol was very easy to obtain, compared to 74 percent of the students not at high risk who thought so. About 59 percent of the high-risk students said that it was very easy to get marijuana, and 40 percent said so about cocaine. Among the non-high-risk students, only 37 percent felt marijuana was very easy to obtain and 25 percent felt that way about cocaine.

Substance use is related closely to the availability of such substances. The easier it is to obtain the substance, the higher the rate of substance use. For example, the current prevalence rate of alcohol was 64 percent for the high-risk students who thought alcohol was very easy to get, whereas only 18 percent of those who thought alcohol was very difficult to obtain drank in the past month (Appendix F, Table F3). About 36 percent of the high-risk students who said mari-

juana was very easy to get actually used marijuana during the previous month, compared to only 2 percent of those who indicated that marijuana was very difficult to get. The relationship consistently holds true for the students not at high risk of dropping out, and for other types of substances.

### *Perceived Danger*

Students were asked about how dangerous they thought it was for kids their age to use substances. The prevalence differences in substance use between the high-risk and not-at-high-risk students may result partly from the differences in students' perceptions of danger. In 1992, fewer high-risk youths felt that substances were very dangerous to use than did non-high-risk students. For example, Figure 10 shows that 42 percent of the high-risk students thought it was very dangerous to drink alcohol in comparison to 51 percent of the other students. As compared to the not-at-high-risk students, fewer high-risk students believed that illicit drugs were very dangerous for kids their age to use (61 percent vs. 78 percent for marijuana; 88 percent vs. 94 percent for cocaine; and 91 percent vs. 95 percent for crack).

Students who believe substances are very dangerous to use are less likely to actually use such substances. Only 37 percent of the students at high risk of dropping out who thought alcohol was very dangerous to use actually drank alcohol during the past month, compared to 76 percent of those who thought alcohol was not very dangerous (Appendix F, Table F4). Among the high-risk students who believed marijuana was very dangerous to use, only 7 percent actually used marijuana during the previous month. By contrast, the past-month prevalence of marijuana was 57 percent for those who believed marijuana was not very dangerous to use. The relationship consistently holds true for the not-at-high-risk youth, and for other substances.

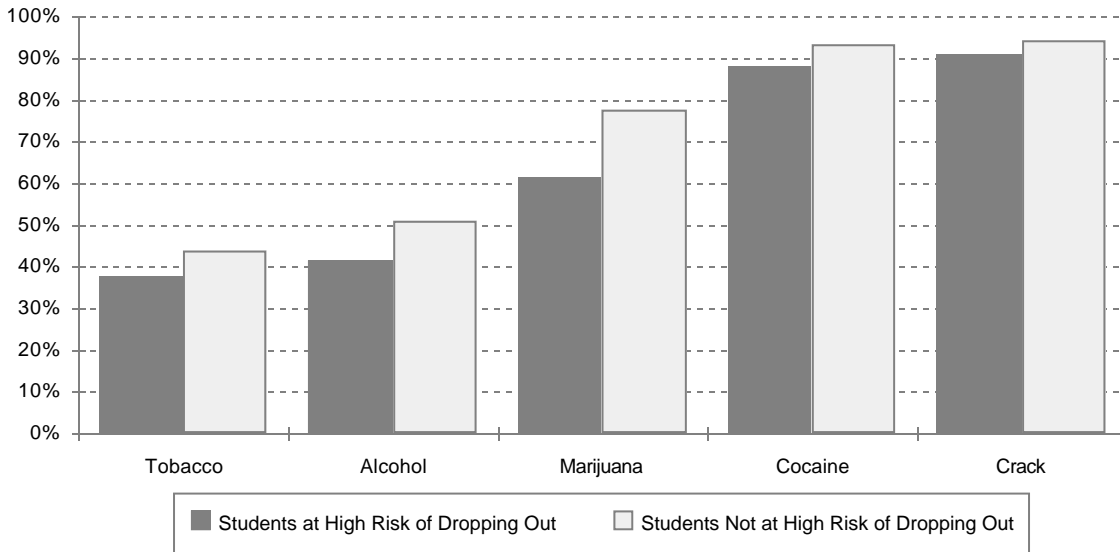
**Parental Attitudes**

Parental attitudes can influence a student's substance use. The differences in the perceptions

of parental attitudes between the high-risk and non-high risk students may contribute to the differences in substance use. Fewer parents of high-risk youths were perceived as strongly/mildly disapproving of beer drinking (71 percent) in comparison to the parents of not-at-high risk youths (76 percent). Similarly, fewer students at high risk of dropping out indicated strong/mild parental disapproval of marijuana use (87 percent) than the other group of students (89 percent).

Adolescents who said that their parents approved of kids their age using substances were more likely to consume substances than those who indicated parental disapproval. For example, only 41 percent of the high-risk students whose parents strongly or mildly disapproved of beer consumption actually drank in the past month, compared to 60 percent of those whose parents strongly or mildly approved (Appendix F, Table F5). Also, the current use of marijuana was only 17 percent for

**Figure 10. Percent of Secondary Students Who Think Substances Are Very Dangerous to Use - 1992**



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**The 1992 Texas School Survey estimates that 9 percent of students in grades 9-12 are at high risk of dropping out and are at risk for substance-use behaviors.**

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the high-risk students whose parents strongly or mildly disapproved of marijuana, whereas it was 40 percent for those who indicated parental approval. The relationship consistently holds true for the youths not at high risk as well.

**Conclusions and Discussion**

The 1992 Texas School Survey results indicate that about 6,700 or 9 percent of students in grades 7-12 are at high risk of dropping out and face complex issues involving peers, families, schools, and community that place them at risk for substance-use behaviors. These substance-use behaviors include high use rates for all substances, heavy drinking (consuming five or more drinks of alcohol per occasion on several times a week during the past year), heavy drug use (weekly use during the past year), and frequent alcohol- and drug-related social problems. Youths at high risk of dropping out have revealed much higher prevalence rates of substance use compared to the youths not at high risk. The higher prevalence rates among the high-risk students remain consistent for lifetime use, annual use, and past-month use as well as for all grades.

Alcohol remains the drug of choice, with 87 percent of the high-risk students and 74 percent of the not-at-high-risk students reporting lifetime use and with 55 percent and 35 percent, respectively, reporting past-month use. Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug. About 40 percent of the high-risk youths and 17 percent of the others have used marijuana at some time in their lives with 18 percent and 6 percent, respectively, reporting past-month use. The grade-level data show that among the students not at high risk of dropping out, the youngest grades have the

lowest rates of substance use, and the oldest grades the highest rates for all substances except inhalants. But for students at high risk of dropping out, the ninth and twelfth graders have the highest rates of use in most substances. As discussed earlier, these substance-use patterns support the hypothesis that substance use is associated with dropping out, since the ninth graders have the highest drop out rate.

The study attempts to characterize students at high risk of dropping out to provide insight as to why they reveal higher rates in substance use. Significant findings show that the high-risk youths are more likely than the non-high-risk youths to be Hispanic, have a job, come from non-metropolitan areas, perform poorly in school, rarely participate in extracurricular activities, live in other than two-parent households, have parents who did not graduate from college, have no parental attendance in school events, feel unsafe in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods, and have numerous friends who are in gangs and who wish to drop out of school. These high-risk adolescents who report that most or all of their peers use substances are involved in a drug-using

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**Since the use of tobacco and/or alcohol usually precedes the use of illicit substances, any reduction and/or delay of onset of tobacco or alcohol use is believed to have a strong preventative effect on the risk of developing drug problems at a later age.**

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culture, have easier access to substances, and perceive less danger in using drugs than the students not at high risk. Also they are more likely to perceive parental approval of kids their age drinking beer and using marijuana than the other students.

The age of first substance use is another important factor that may influence the prevalence rates among secondary school students. The

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**Effective programs for at-risk students result from a combination of programs, interaction of parents, school and community personnel, and an aspiration on the part of district administrators and teachers to succeed with these students.**

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estimated average age of first use by type of substance shows that students start using licit substances earlier than they begin using illicit substances. Since the use of tobacco and alcohol typically precedes the use of marijuana, uppers, and cocaine, any reduction and/or delay of onset of tobacco or alcohol use is believed to have a strong preventive effect on the risk of developing drug problems at a later age.

Since substance use is more prevalent and substance-related problems occur more frequently among students at high risk of dropping out of school, it is very important to target these youth in prevention and intervention efforts. Although a great number of school-related factors tend to gain considerable attention for students' dropping out, parental characteristics are quite critical for high-risk youths. Parents' failure to monitor their children's progress in school can contribute to the accumulation of concrete problems which eventually result in youthful dropping out. A national study (Ekstrom et al. 1987) found that dropping out is very much related to the family-education support variable, which includes the mother's educational aspirations for the student, study aids, and parental involvement in the selection of the student's high school curriculum. Bronfenbrenner (1986) also noted that children feel insecure when parent-child relationships are disturbed and begin to feel alienated. This can create difficulty in a child's ability to pay attention in school.

The Texas Education Agency (1993) presented a few recommendations for reducing the state's dropout rate including family and community support, peer/adult role modeling, flexible

scheduling, competency-based award of credit, recruitment of minority educators, professional staff development, enhanced elementary student support services, and increased family literacy programs. To effectively provide prevention and intervention programs for at-risk students, Wells (1990) suggests characteristics of successful programs compiled from various sources. These characteristics include preschool early childhood intervention programs, small classes, program flexibility, improved curriculum, study skills at all levels, peer tutoring, mentor programs, counseling, self-concept development, vocational and work/study programs, school-directed alternative educational programs, parental involvement, student assistance programs to address substance abuse, suicide prevention, and other health issues, school-community partnerships, and community-based youth activities.

One-on-one involvement with a significant other, either in a mentoring or tutoring situation, is one of the most effective strategies for helping at-risk students. The peer tutoring and mentor programs can provide a caring environment to foster high student expectations (Orum 1984). Parents can encourage and influence their children's success in school, too. The benefits of increased parental involvement are improved student attendance, decreased dropout rates, more positive parent-student communication, and increased parent-community support of the school (Texas Dropout Information Clearinghouse 1989). Examples of components of parental involvement programs include parent-teacher meetings, training workshops, open houses, home visitations, and parent study groups. In Texas, Barrett et al. (1988) studied four drug abuse intervention programs (located in Austin, Del Rio, and Houston) for Hispanic youths. Findings reveal that student drug abuse programs should emphasize the development of positive peer relations and family support while encouraging disassociation with deviant peers.

Counseling programs that stress the important issue of self-concept can establish trust and communication with at-risk students and be more effective in keeping students in school. Counselors also must become involved in the prevention of, as

well as the rehabilitation process for, substance abuse by at-risk students (Wircenski 1991). Alternative school programs may also be a way to deal with these youth. These consist of sequences of classes that are designed specifically for a larger number of students, such as truants, drug abusers, or students in trouble with the law, and provide more teacher-student interaction and individualized instruction. Additionally, student-assistance programs can be very effective through the joint school-community effort and personal home contacts. Two specific program descriptions for student-assistance programs that assess, refer, and support students affected by substance abuse are presented in Appendix G.

Overall, dropping out of school is a multifaceted and complex problem requiring inter-agency collaboration at all levels. Effective programs for at-risk students result from a combination of programs, components, interaction of parents, school, and community personnel, and an aspiration on the part of district administrators and teachers to succeed with these students.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Texas Education Agency (TEA) criteria for identifying students at risk of dropping out are listed in Appendix B.
- <sup>2</sup> Legally, students are not allowed to drop out of school until they are age 16.
- <sup>3</sup> Of the total number of dropouts during the 1991-92 school year, only 2,056 (4 percent) and 3,511 (7 percent) dropped out in grades 7 and 8 respectively. However, there was a significant increase in the number of dropouts by grade 9. A total of 16,058 (30 percent) in grade 9 dropped out of school. And, 12,518 (23 percent) students, 10,210 (19 percent) students, and 9,068 (17 percent) students dropped out in grades 10, 11, and 12 respectively.





# Appendices

**Appendix A**  
**Percent of All Secondary Students Responding to Questions About**  
**School Absences by Grade - 1992**

In the past school year, how many days have you missed a whole day of school...

Because you "skipped" or "cut"?

	None	1 day	2-3 days	4-9 days	10+ days
All	68.9%	10.3%	10.9%	6.3%	3.7%
Grade 7	83.5%	6.4%	6.4%	2.4%	1.4%
Grade 8	81.4%	6.9%	6.2%	3.8%	1.7%
Grade 9	68.5%	9.2%	10.6%	6.1%	5.6%
Grade 10	61.4%	12.8%	13.2%	8.1%	4.5%
Grade 11	59.5%	13.1%	14.3%	9.1%	4.2%
Grade 12	52.0%	15.6%	17.5%	10.0%	5.0%

Because you were ill?

	None	1 day	2-3 days	4-9 days	10+ days
All	23.2%	16.1%	33.5%	21.0%	6.2%
Grade 7	23.3%	17.8%	32.8%	20.2%	5.9%
Grade 8	23.3%	14.8%	33.0%	21.7%	7.2%
Grade 9	24.7%	14.7%	32.0%	21.9%	6.7%
Grade 10	22.3%	15.2%	34.8%	21.3%	6.3%
Grade 11	22.2%	16.4%	35.2%	20.2%	6.0%
Grade 12	22.8%	18.6%	33.6%	20.2%	4.8%

For some other reason?

	None	1 day	2-3 days	4-9 days	10+ days
All	41.7%	25.5%	23.6%	6.9%	2.3%
Grade 7	50.7%	25.2%	16.6%	5.8%	1.7%
Grade 8	45.9%	25.3%	21.6%	5.4%	1.8%
Grade 9	43.2%	23.5%	23.9%	6.2%	3.2%
Grade 10	37.0%	26.1%	26.6%	7.5%	2.8%
Grade 11	38.1%	25.3%	25.9%	8.3%	2.4%
Grade 12	31.1%	28.6%	29.3%	9.0%	2.1%

Note: Percentages are weighted to reflect the actual demographic composition of Texas secondary schools.

## Appendix B

### TEA Criteria for Identifying Students at High Risk Of Dropping Out

The Texas Education Agency considers that students in grades 7-12 who are below the age of 21 years and who meet one or more of the following conditions shall be identified as at risk of dropping out of school:

- (1) Have not been promoted one or more times in grades 1-6 based on the established academic criteria and continue to be unable to master the essential elements in the seventh or higher grade level;
- (2) Are two or more years below grade level in reading or mathematics;
- (3) Have failed at least two courses in one or more semesters and are not expected to graduate within four years of the time they entered the ninth grade;
- (4) Have failed one or more of the reading, writing, or mathematics sections of the most recent TEAMS/TAAS test beginning with the seventh grade;
- (5) In addition to criteria outlined above, the district may consider the environmental, familial, economic, social, developmental, and other psycho-social factors in determining services where such factor contributes to the student's inability to progress academically; or
- (6) A student who is pregnant or is a parent.

Also, for students identified as at risk, district procedures shall include the following components:

- (1) Assessment of each student's needs;
- (2) Determination of academic options, services, and alternative programs delineated in local school district policies to be utilized for each student;
- (3) Notification to the parent or guardian of each student stating the primary conclusions of the assessment of such student's needs and the services or alternative program or programs in which such student is being

- placed. Notification is waived for students identified at risk because of sexual, physical, or psychological abuse;
- (4) Ongoing evaluation of each student's academic progress, including progress toward promotion or high school graduation and monitoring of intervention activities provided to ensure that student needs are addressed;
  - (5) Grade report to parent which clearly specifies the functional level of each student; and
  - (6) Provision for student to exit a program when appropriate.

Source: *Promotion and Alternatives to Social Promotion*, November 1993 Update, Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency.

**Appendix C**  
**Percent of Secondary Students Who Drove While Drunk During the**  
**Past 12 Months by Number of Times and Grade - 1992**

**(A) Students at High Risk of Dropping Out**

	<u>None</u>	<u>1 Time</u>	<u>2-3 Times</u>	<u>4+ Times</u>
All	79.2%	6.6%	6.6%	7.7%
Grade 7	86.3%	6.3%	3.1%	4.4%
Grade 8	93.0%	2.3%	2.0%	2.8%
Grade 9	80.2%	3.9%	8.1%	7.8%
Grade 10	77.7%	6.7%	7.1%	8.6%
Grade 11	76.1%	8.7%	8.1%	7.1%
Grade 12	60.0%	14.5%	9.9%	15.6%

**(B) Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out**

	<u>None</u>	<u>1 Time</u>	<u>2-3 Times</u>	<u>4+ Times</u>
All	90.2%	4.1%	3.6%	2.1%
Grade 7	96.9%	2.0%	0.8%	0.3%
Grade 8	94.9%	2.6%	2.1%	0.4%
Grade 9	94.4%	2.8%	2.4%	0.5%
Grade 10	91.0%	3.7%	3.0%	2.3%
Grade 11	83.1%	6.2%	6.7%	4.0%
Grade 12	75.0%	9.2%	8.6%	7.2%

Note: Percentages are weighted to reflect the actual demographic composition of Texas secondary public schools.

Appendix D - Prevalence Tables

**Table D1. Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade: Students at High Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Tobacco</b>	<b>69.9%</b>	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>
Grade 7	62.2%	32.1%	12.8%	17.3%	37.8%
Grade 8	65.0%	28.0%	14.1%	22.9%	35.1%
Grade 9	77.1%	44.7%	12.9%	19.5%	22.9%
Grade 10	70.2%	35.8%	12.9%	21.5%	29.8%
Grade 11	72.4%	35.2%	16.4%	20.9%	27.6%
Grade 12	73.7%	40.7%	10.2%	22.8%	26.3%
<b>Alcohol</b>	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>55.1%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>
Grade 7	73.3%	43.6%	20.0%	9.8%	26.7%
Grade 8	83.8%	45.7%	20.8%	17.3%	16.2%
Grade 9	90.9%	61.4%	16.7%	12.8%	9.1%
Grade 10	88.9%	58.4%	18.6%	11.9%	11.1%
Grade 11	92.5%	57.8%	24.6%	10.2%	7.5%
Grade 12	93.7%	68.1%	16.2%	9.5%	6.3%
<b>Inhalants *</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>65.6%</b>
Grade 7	40.3%	15.4%	15.3%	9.7%	59.7%
Grade 8	31.4%	7.0%	16.4%	8.1%	68.6%
Grade 9	37.7%	6.6%	16.3%	14.8%	62.3%
Grade 10	33.8%	5.7%	13.3%	14.8%	66.2%
Grade 11	31.0%	2.0%	8.0%	21.0%	69.0%
Grade 12	29.3%	5.0%	4.5%	19.8%	70.7%
<b>Any Illicit Drug</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>55.9%</b>
Grade 7	27.9%	14.5%	6.3%	7.2%	72.1%
Grade 8	28.5%	13.5%	10.1%	5.0%	71.5%
Grade 9	56.1%	27.5%	10.4%	18.2%	43.9%
Grade 10	51.3%	25.6%	13.4%	12.3%	48.7%
Grade 11	48.3%	25.9%	12.0%	10.4%	51.7%
Grade 12	57.2%	25.2%	14.2%	17.8%	42.8%
<b>Marijuana</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>59.9%</b>
Grade 7	24.9%	12.2%	4.6%	8.2%	75.1%
Grade 8	24.4%	9.9%	9.3%	5.3%	75.6%
Grade 9	52.7%	24.9%	10.3%	17.5%	47.3%
Grade 10	44.5%	19.0%	14.2%	11.4%	55.5%
Grade 11	45.0%	21.7%	11.0%	12.3%	55.0%
Grade 12	54.1%	21.3%	14.7%	18.1%	45.9%
<b>Marijuana Only**</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>
Grade 7	13.2%	5.3%	2.9%	5.0%	86.8%
Grade 8	9.3%	1.9%	3.8%	3.6%	90.7%
Grade 9	25.3%	7.3%	4.7%	13.4%	74.7%
Grade 10	22.2%	6.5%	8.6%	7.1%	77.8%
Grade 11	20.6%	8.0%	4.4%	8.2%	79.4%
Grade 12	28.6%	7.6%	8.4%	12.7%	71.4%

\* Inhalant use is adjusted based on all data from the survey, to include all appropriate responses.

\*\*The only illicit drug these students have used is marijuana.

**Table D-1 (Continued). Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade:  
Students at High Risk of Dropping Out -1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Cocaine or Crack</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>87.1%</b>
Grade 7	5.5%	2.6%	1.9%	0.9%	94.6%
Grade 8	10.2%	2.0%	6.2%	2.0%	89.8%
Grade 9	17.7%	5.1%	5.0%	7.6%	82.3%
Grade 10	14.5%	5.4%	5.6%	3.5%	85.5%
Grade 11	13.5%	3.5%	5.0%	5.1%	86.5%
Grade 12	17.2%	6.4%	4.6%	6.3%	82.8%
<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>89.0%</b>
Grade 7	3.1%	0.8%	1.7%	0.7%	96.9%
Grade 8	8.5%	1.2%	5.3%	1.9%	91.6%
Grade 9	14.6%	4.9%	4.8%	4.9%	85.4%
Grade 10	12.9%	5.1%	5.6%	2.1%	87.2%
Grade 11	13.0%	3.4%	4.6%	5.1%	87.0%
Grade 12	16.4%	5.6%	4.4%	6.5%	83.6%
<b>Crack</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>
Grade 7	3.7%	1.9%	1.1%	0.6%	96.4%
Grade 8	3.6%	1.1%	2.1%	0.4%	96.4%
Grade 9	6.1%	1.6%	1.1%	3.5%	93.9%
Grade 10	5.9%	0.9%	2.3%	2.7%	94.1%
Grade 11	3.6%	0.8%	1.9%	0.9%	96.4%
Grade 12	4.9%	1.4%	2.1%	1.4%	95.1%
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>
Grade 7	5.2%	1.9%	1.1%	2.2%	94.8%
Grade 8	3.9%	2.4%	1.2%	0.4%	96.1%
Grade 9	16.7%	5.4%	2.7%	8.6%	83.4%
Grade 10	12.4%	7.3%	2.6%	2.4%	87.6%
Grade 11	14.7%	4.4%	4.3%	6.1%	85.3%
Grade 12	17.0%	5.6%	6.3%	5.2%	83.0%
<b>Uppers</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>85.9%</b>
Grade 7	7.8%	2.6%	4.0%	1.2%	92.2%
Grade 8	11.3%	4.4%	4.4%	2.6%	88.7%
Grade 9	14.6%	5.2%	4.5%	4.9%	85.4%
Grade 10	17.2%	4.8%	5.5%	6.9%	82.8%
Grade 11	17.5%	4.9%	2.8%	9.8%	82.5%
Grade 12	19.2%	3.9%	7.0%	8.3%	80.9%
<b>Downers</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>89.0%</b>
Grade 7	7.8%	1.7%	2.8%	3.3%	92.2%
Grade 8	12.0%	3.8%	5.1%	3.1%	88.0%
Grade 9	9.7%	1.8%	4.7%	3.2%	90.3%
Grade 10	13.5%	3.6%	4.8%	5.2%	86.5%
Grade 11	13.1%	5.8%	2.7%	4.5%	86.9%
Grade 12	11.3%	2.5%	4.9%	3.9%	88.7%

**Table D-1 (Continued). Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade:  
Students at High Risk of Dropping Out -1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Steroids</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>96.6%</b>
Grade 7	2.8%	1.2%	0.4%	1.3%	97.2%
Grade 8	2.0%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	98.0%
Grade 9	4.7%	0.5%	2.1%	2.1%	95.3%
Grade 10	5.0%	0.0%	4.7%	0.3%	95.0%
Grade 11	2.9%	1.1%	1.3%	0.6%	97.1%
Grade 12	2.6%	0.6%	0.8%	1.2%	97.4%
<b>Ecstasy</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>93.6%</b>
Grade 7	3.5%	2.3%	0.7%	0.5%	96.5%
Grade 8	1.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.5%	98.8%
Grade 9	7.6%	3.4%	1.6%	2.6%	92.4%
Grade 10	6.2%	2.2%	1.6%	2.4%	93.8%
Grade 11	9.7%	3.9%	2.6%	3.2%	90.3%
Grade 12	13.0%	2.2%	4.3%	6.5%	87.0%

**Table D2. Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade:  
Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Tobacco</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
Grade 7	41.4%	13.6%	11.9%	15.9%	58.6%
Grade 8	48.6%	16.1%	13.6%	18.9%	51.4%
Grade 9	54.9%	20.2%	14.0%	20.7%	45.1%
Grade 10	56.9%	20.3%	14.1%	22.4%	43.1%
Grade 11	57.1%	22.9%	11.2%	23.1%	42.9%
Grade 12	61.1%	25.4%	12.8%	22.8%	38.9%
<b>Alcohol</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>
Grade 7	57.1%	22.1%	15.8%	19.2%	42.9%
Grade 8	69.7%	29.0%	20.7%	20.1%	30.3%
Grade 9	76.3%	35.5%	23.9%	16.9%	23.7%
Grade 10	81.6%	39.5%	25.3%	16.8%	18.4%
Grade 11	83.0%	42.9%	24.9%	15.2%	17.0%
Grade 12	85.3%	47.9%	22.6%	14.8%	14.7%
<b>Inhalants *</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>77.7%</b>
Grade 7	25.4%	9.0%	7.0%	9.4%	74.6%
Grade 8	26.1%	8.3%	7.2%	10.5%	73.9%
Grade 9	21.7%	3.4%	7.1%	11.2%	78.3%
Grade 10	21.2%	3.7%	5.9%	11.6%	78.8%
Grade 11	19.8%	3.0%	4.2%	12.6%	80.2%
Grade 12	17.4%	1.8%	4.6%	11.0%	82.6%
<b>Any Illicit Drug</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>80.1%</b>
Grade 7	10.2%	4.3%	2.6%	3.3%	89.8%
Grade 8	13.7%	4.3%	3.6%	5.8%	86.3%
Grade 9	19.5%	7.6%	5.7%	6.2%	80.5%
Grade 10	25.5%	8.6%	7.8%	9.1%	74.6%
Grade 11	27.0%	9.6%	7.8%	9.7%	73.0%
Grade 12	29.0%	8.7%	7.7%	12.6%	71.0%
<b>Marijuana</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>82.7%</b>
Grade 7	8.8%	3.3%	2.1%	3.4%	91.2%
Grade 8	10.7%	3.5%	2.7%	4.6%	89.3%
Grade 9	17.0%	6.1%	5.0%	5.9%	83.0%
Grade 10	22.2%	7.1%	6.6%	8.6%	77.8%
Grade 11	23.9%	7.3%	6.9%	9.7%	76.1%
Grade 12	26.5%	7.0%	7.4%	12.1%	73.5%
<b>Marijuana Only**</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>
Grade 7	5.7%	1.8%	1.3%	2.6%	94.3%
Grade 8	6.7%	1.4%	1.6%	3.6%	93.3%
Grade 9	9.3%	2.5%	2.8%	4.0%	90.7%
Grade 10	12.9%	3.0%	3.6%	6.2%	87.1%
Grade 11	13.4%	2.7%	3.8%	6.9%	86.6%
Grade 12	14.5%	2.1%	3.8%	8.6%	85.5%

\* Inhalant use is adjusted based on all data from the survey to include all appropriate responses.

\*\*The only illicit drug these students have used is marijuana.



**Table D2 (Continued). Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade:  
Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Cocaine or Crack</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>95.9%</b>
Grade 7	2.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	97.9%
Grade 8	2.8%	0.7%	1.0%	1.1%	97.2%
Grade 9	4.5%	1.6%	1.3%	1.6%	95.5%
Grade 10	5.2%	1.3%	1.3%	2.6%	94.8%
Grade 11	4.8%	1.4%	1.4%	2.0%	95.3%
Grade 12	6.4%	1.3%	2.1%	3.0%	93.6%
<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>
Grade 7	1.8%	0.8%	0.5%	0.5%	98.2%
Grade 8	2.5%	0.6%	0.9%	1.0%	97.5%
Grade 9	4.1%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	96.0%
Grade 10	4.8%	1.3%	1.3%	2.3%	95.2%
Grade 11	4.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.8%	95.6%
Grade 12	6.2%	1.3%	1.9%	3.0%	93.8%
<b>Crack</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>98.4%</b>
Grade 7	1.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	99.0%
Grade 8	1.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%	98.4%
Grade 9	1.9%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%	98.1%
Grade 10	1.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	98.4%
Grade 11	1.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	98.8%
Grade 12	2.0%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%	98.0%
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>95.8%</b>
Grade 7	1.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	98.5%
Grade 8	2.1%	0.6%	1.1%	0.4%	98.0%
Grade 9	4.5%	1.1%	1.6%	1.9%	95.5%
Grade 10	5.2%	1.4%	2.4%	1.5%	94.8%
Grade 11	6.0%	2.0%	2.2%	1.8%	94.0%
Grade 12	7.2%	1.7%	2.5%	3.1%	92.8%
<b>Uppers</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>
Grade 7	1.8%	0.9%	0.4%	0.5%	98.2%
Grade 8	4.4%	1.3%	1.6%	1.5%	95.6%
Grade 9	5.4%	1.4%	1.7%	2.3%	94.6%
Grade 10	6.9%	1.8%	2.7%	2.5%	93.1%
Grade 11	8.5%	2.1%	3.1%	3.3%	91.5%
Grade 12	8.5%	2.2%	2.4%	4.0%	91.5%
<b>Downers</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>
Grade 7	1.9%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%	98.1%
Grade 8	3.3%	0.8%	1.4%	1.1%	96.7%
Grade 9	3.2%	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	96.8%
Grade 10	5.0%	1.2%	1.9%	1.8%	95.0%
Grade 11	5.3%	1.4%	1.7%	2.2%	94.7%
Grade 12	4.9%	0.8%	1.5%	2.6%	95.1%

**Table D2 (Continued). Prevalence and Recency of Use of Substances by Grade:  
Students Not at Risk of Dropping Out - 1992**

	<b>Ever Used</b>	<b>Past Month</b>	<b>School Year</b>	<b>Not Past Year</b>	<b>Never Used</b>
<b>Steroids</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>98.5%</b>
Grade 7	1.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	98.3%
Grade 8	1.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	98.8%
Grade 9	1.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	98.4%
Grade 10	1.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	98.4%
Grade 11	1.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	98.8%
Grade 12	1.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	98.5%
<b>Ecstasy</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>97.8%</b>
Grade 7	1.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%	98.7%
Grade 8	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	99.3%
Grade 9	1.7%	0.3%	0.7%	0.7%	98.3%
Grade 10	2.3%	0.5%	0.7%	1.1%	97.7%
Grade 11	3.1%	0.5%	1.2%	1.4%	96.9%
Grade 12	5.0%	0.5%	1.6%	3.0%	95.0%

**Appendix E**  
**About How Many Times Have You Ever Sniffed, Huffed,**  
**or Inhaled the Following Inhalants “For Kicks” or to Get “High”?**

	Never	Ever	1-2 Times	3-10 Times	11-19 Times	20+ Times
<b>Liquid or spray paint</b>						
High-Risk Students	84.6%	15.4%	9.0%	3.7%	0.9%	1.9%
Non-High-Risk Students	92.3%	7.7%	5.7%	1.4%	0.3%	0.4%
<b>Correction fluid</b>						
High-Risk Students	78.2%	21.8%	15.3%	4.4%	1.0%	1.2%
Non-High-Risk Students	86.9%	13.1%	10.0%	2.3%	0.4%	0.5%
<b>Gasoline</b>						
High-Risk Students	87.7%	12.3%	7.7%	2.3%	0.9%	1.4%
Non-High-Risk Students	92.2%	7.8%	5.0%	1.7%	0.4%	0.7%
<b>Freon</b>						
High-Risk-Students	95.1%	5.0%	2.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.5%
Non-High-Risk Students	98.1%	1.9%	1.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%
<b>Poppers, Locker Room, Rush, Medusa, Whippets, CO2</b>						
High-Risk Students	93.4%	6.7%	2.9%	2.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Non-High-Risk Students	97.2%	2.8%	1.8%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%
<b>Shoe Shine, Texas Shine</b>						
High-Risk Students	96.8%	3.2%	2.2%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%
Non-High-Risk Students	98.0%	2.0%	1.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Glue</b>						
High-Risk Students	87.4%	12.6%	9.3%	1.9%	0.6%	0.9%
Non-High-Risk Students	91.4%	8.6%	6.6%	1.4%	0.3%	0.3%
<b>Paint or Lacquer Thinner, Toluene, or Other Solvents</b>						
High-Risk Students	87.2%	12.8%	8.0%	2.7%	0.7%	1.4%
Non-High-Risk Students	93.6%	6.4%	4.5%	1.1%	0.5%	0.3%
<b>Other Sprays - Nonstick Cooking Spray, Hair Spray, etc.</b>						
High-Risk Students	90.4%	9.6%	6.1%	2.1%	0.4%	1.1%
Non-High-Risk Students	93.3%	6.7%	4.5%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%
<b>Other Inhalants</b>						
High-Risk Students	85.8%	14.2%	7.1%	4.3%	0.8%	2.0%
Non-High-Risk Students	93.4%	6.6%	4.2%	1.4%	0.4%	0.7%

Note: “High-Risk Students” refers to secondary students at high risk of dropping out.

Appendix F

Table F1. About How Many of Your Close Friends Use...?

<b>Tobacco (Cigarettes, Smokeless Tobacco)</b>						
	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>			<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>		
	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>
All	18.7%	48.5%	32.8%	32.2%	52.9%	15.0%
Grade 7	26.9%	46.9%	26.1%	45.3%	44.9%	9.8%
Grade 8	24.5%	50.8%	24.7%	37.5%	51.2%	11.3%
Grade 9	16.1%	43.1%	40.8%	27.7%	56.0%	16.3%
Grade 10	16.2%	52.3%	31.5%	27.4%	55.5%	17.1%
Grade 11	14.6%	48.2%	37.2%	26.2%	53.4%	20.5%
Grade 12	16.4%	53.2%	30.4%	24.6%	58.3%	17.1%

<b>Alcohol (Beer, Wine Coolers, Wine, Hard Liquor)?</b>						
	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>			<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>		
	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>
All	7.8%	33.7%	58.5%	18.4%	45.9%	35.8%
Grade 7	19.5%	39.9%	40.6%	37.5%	46.3%	16.2%
Grade 8	14.0%	43.6%	42.5%	25.5%	50.6%	23.9%
Grade 9	6.1%	30.2%	63.8%	14.9%	48.4%	36.7%
Grade 10	4.0%	28.3%	67.7%	9.7%	45.7%	44.6%
Grade 11	1.8%	33.4%	64.8%	8.3%	41.1%	50.6%
Grade 12	3.9%	29.4%	66.8%	7.1%	40.4%	52.5%

<b>Inhalants (Spray, Glue, Gasoline, etc.)?</b>						
	<b>Students at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>			<b>Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out</b>		
	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few/Some</b>	<b>Most/All</b>
All	69.8%	24.4%	5.9%	82.6%	15.9%	1.5%
Grade 7	63.3%	26.4%	10.3%	82.1%	16.1%	1.8%
Grade 8	64.5%	31.0%	4.6%	77.8%	19.3%	2.8%
Grade 9	62.1%	27.6%	10.4%	82.2%	16.3%	1.5%
Grade 10	75.1%	22.7%	2.2%	82.4%	16.5%	1.1%
Grade 11	74.3%	21.6%	4.1%	84.2%	14.6%	1.1%
Grade 12	84.3%	14.3%	1.5%	88.9%	10.7%	0.4%

**Table F1 (Continued). How Many of Your Close Friends Use...?**

**Marijuana?**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out			Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out		
	None	A Few/Some	Most/All	None	A Few/Some	Most/All
All	40.6%	39.4%	20.1%	64.2%	28.9%	6.9%
Grade 7	60.7%	22.6%	16.8%	81.3%	15.1%	3.6%
Grade 8	57.2%	32.1%	10.7%	72.8%	21.7%	5.6%
Grade 9	31.6%	41.8%	26.7%	61.4%	30.7%	7.9%
Grade 10	35.1%	44.1%	20.9%	53.2%	37.5%	9.4%
Grade 11	33.0%	48.8%	18.3%	55.2%	36.6%	8.2%
Grade 12	34.7%	42.9%	22.5%	55.7%	37.1%	7.1%

**Some Other Illicit Drug (Cocaine, Crack, Hallucinogens, Uppers, etc.)?**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out			Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out		
	None	A Few/Some	Most/All	None	A Few/Some	Most/All
All	56.6%	32.6%	10.8%	75.1%	21.5%	3.3%
Grade 7	67.5%	21.2%	11.3%	84.2%	13.8%	2.0%
Grade 8	64.2%	29.8%	6.0%	79.3%	17.7%	3.0%
Grade 9	51.4%	34.5%	14.1%	74.3%	21.6%	4.0%
Grade 10	50.9%	38.9%	10.2%	69.0%	27.5%	3.5%
Grade 11	54.9%	32.5%	12.6%	70.7%	24.8%	4.5%
Grade 12	55.7%	35.7%	8.6%	69.6%	27.3%	3.1%

**Table F2. Past-Month Use of Substances by Number of Close Friends Who Use Substances Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out			Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out		
	None	A Few/Some	Most/All	None	A Few/Some	Most/All
Tobacco	5.6%	26.2%	72.8%	2.8%	18.4%	61.8%
Alcohol	6.6%	36.5%	76.3%	4.7%	26.3%	64.9%
Any Illicit Drug	1.4%	22.2%	65.5%	0.5%	11.4%	48.5%
Marijuana	0.8%	17.7%	61.9%	0.2%	9.9%	44.8%
Cocaine	0.2%	8.5%	27.2%	0.1%	4.7%	33.7%
Crack	0.2%	3.5%	20.3%	0.1%	1.6%	14.9%
Hallucinogens	0.1%	10.5%	49.7%	0.1%	6.0%	36.4%
Uppers	0.2%	14.9%	41.9%	0.2%	10.7%	40.3%

**Table F3. Past-Month Use of Substances by Perceived Availability Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out		Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out	
	Very Difficult to Get	Very Easy to Get	Very Difficult to Get	Very Easy to Get
Tobacco	6.1%	47.3%	7.3%	29.2%
Alcohol	17.6%	63.9%	15.2%	47.4%
Marijuana	1.9%	36.2%	1.3%	17.6%
Cocaine	0.4%	10.4%	0.2%	4.4%
Crack	0.0%	3.9%	0.1%	1.3%
Hallucinogens	0.2%	16.1%	0.1%	6.4%

**Table F4. Past-Month Use of Substances by Perceived Danger Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out		Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out	
	Very Dangerous	Not Very Dangerous	Very Dangerous	Not Very Dangerous
Tobacco	23.8%	51.9%	8.7%	34.3%
Alcohol	36.8%	76.2%	21.7%	61.0%
Marijuana	7.2%	56.5%	1.9%	31.2%
Cocaine	2.1%	14.9%	0.6%	23.1%
Crack	0.6%	7.8%	0.2%	6.2%
Ecstasy	1.4%	26.6%	0.1%	5.1%

**Table F5. Past-Month Use of Beer and Marijuana by Parental Approval Among Secondary Students - 1992**

	Students at High Risk of Dropping Out		Students Not at High Risk of Dropping Out	
	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove	Approve
Beer	41.1%	60.0%	20.6%	51.0%
Marijuana	17.1%	40.0%	4.7%	16.1%

## Appendix G

### Two Examples of Student Assistance Programs

**Title of Program:**

Edgewood Independent School District  
Student Assistance Program (San Antonio,  
Texas)

**Level:**

Elementary School

**Description:**

This Student Assistance Program (SAP) is recognized as an outstanding program by the 1994 National Conference Awards Program of the National Organization of Student Assistance Programs and Partner. Serving a 99 percent Hispanic student population, the Edgewood Independent School District, located in San Antonio, Texas, implemented its SAP in 1990-91. Several factors have indicated a need for early prevention and intervention: substance abuse among youths, discipline problems, high absenteeism, and many socioeconomically disadvantaged children affected by chemical dependency in the family. Academic indicators also show significant numbers of elementary-level students at risk for academic failure. For these reasons, the SAP was established on three elementary campuses.

The schools provide the students with basic prevention education and afterschool activities. Beyond that, SAP specialists serve students referred to the program. These students may be directed to in-school support groups or to other appropriate in-district programs and/or community agencies. Students repeatedly referred to the SAP for misbehavior can choose between disciplinary consequences or participation in evening insight groups. The parents of students who choose the latter must simultaneously participate in the Together Our Parents Succeed (TOPS) support groups. If necessary, the Child, Adolescent and Parent Services (CAPS) program provides additional individual/family counseling services.

The SAP Coordinator and each school's principal oversee the program. Core teams at each campus belong to the SAP Task Force which

focuses on the SAP's ongoing planning, maintenance, and evaluation. Comprised of community members, the Drug-Free Schools Advisory Council also assists in advising, planning, and evaluating the entire program. Numerous public and private community organizations provide additional recreational, prevention, counseling, and academic support for the SAP.

The SAP is making a noticeable difference in the schools. Presently, 30 percent of the student population at each campus receive SAP services. Parent and self referrals have increased 25 percent since 1991. Surveys of campus staff, students, and family members indicate improved family interactions, peer relationships, parental involvement and academic achievement, and decreased disciplinary referrals, absenteeism, and tardiness.

**Title of Program:**

Student Assistance Services (Odessa,  
Texas)

**Level:**

Grades Pre-K - 12

**Description:**

Student Assistance Services (SAS) Department currently serves 34 regular education campuses (9 secondary and 26 elementary), and provides crisis intervention and prevention services to three early childhood centers and three alternative programs in the Ector County Independent School District. The SAS program addresses adolescent issues including suicide, teenage pregnancy, chemical abuse, and co-dependency. The program is responsible for the identification and referral of students and provision of services in the areas of prevention, education, and intervention.

SAS provides the following programs: an early intervention and referral system for students problems; core teams on secondary and targeted elementary campuses to help to identify, refer, and support students; a support system and support groups for students; a follow-up and tracking



system; a six-hour insight class; individual and group counseling with students and parents; educational presentations to parents, students, staff, and the community; and networking with community agencies. SAS is a structured series of presentations, group discussions, and confrontations. A core team is made up of dedicated teachers and counselors. These educators meet on a semi-monthly basis to discuss possible referrals, gather data, and make recommendations concerning the SAS program. A support group, made up of 8-10 students, is facilitated by a trained counselor. The sessions focus on self-perception, the development of skills for positive decision making, and the assumption of personal responsibility for decisions and actions. Meeting weekly, the support groups give students a confidential setting to talk and share concerns and problems.

The SAS department consists of two social workers and five visiting community liaisons who work to make direct contact with families having trouble with school attendance. The visiting community liaisons make initial contacts to establish the reasons for lack of attendance and then further refer those families in need of services to the two social workers. The social workers serve as direct linkages to area agencies which can provide additional services. They also serve as the intermediaries between the judicial system governing school attendance laws and the enforcement of them.

The SAS counseling and social work departments work together to intervene with nonproductive behavior patterns of students based on a regular campus instructional setting. As the students and their needs are identified, efforts are made to maintain the high-risk students in the regular setting by providing direct mental health support services.