



Report: Safe and Drug Free Schools Outcome Data (2008-09)

This report covers the outcome survey data collected on the schools visited by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center during the academic year 2008-09, and funded by the Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant (Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Boston, MA).

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

123 educators responded and completed the survey. The sample was composed of:

- 23% high schools;
- 27% middle schools;
- The remainder was K-12 or elementary schools.

Of the programs delivered to schools, 60% were faculty trainings; 28% were student programs; and 12% were parent presentations delivered by MARC Parent Presenters. Of the schools that received student programs, 23 schools hosted MARC student assemblies; 11 received student facilitations (peer leadership trainings), which are presented by BSC graduate and undergraduate students.

Of the survey respondents, 73% were female; 27% were male. About half were classroom teachers; 20% were administrators; 19% were counseling or psychological staff; and the remainder were nursing staff and other faculty/staff.

Respondents strongly indicated the need for such programs. Two-thirds characterize bullying in their school as "moderate," although fully 43% estimated that bullying happens daily or more often. The reasons most often cited for bullying include: physical appearance; popularity/social status; special needs; clothes; athletic ability; and sexual orientation. Educators are somewhat aware of the impact of online bullying; 71% estimate that 25-50% of in-school bullying has an online component.

GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAMS

General satisfaction with the program is high. Only 2% of schools indicated that they would not be interested in receiving more MARC services and the vast majority (77%) definitely wanted more. (Most schools do have a basis of comparison; 70% had used other bullying prevention programs.) About two-thirds of schools rated their interaction with MARC as "very positive" and most of the remainder rated it as "mostly positive." Almost all of the schools rated the general impression of the MARC programs as positive (92%), with 70% rating them as "very positive."

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM:

Almost half (40%) of the schools saw an impact, with the vast majority reporting an increase in awareness and reporting of bullying behaviors as the indicator of that impact.

Impact of the faculty training program:

Every single respondent (100%) felt that the training improved the ability of the faculty to react effectively to bullying. 81% felt that most faculty members would, after the training, know what to do with a bully and victim if incident is reported, observed, or implied. Again, almost all (97%) felt the faculty training was interesting and engaging (with 66% marking “definitely” interesting and engaging). Almost 100% saw the training as useful and practical (66% definitely) and well-received (76% definitely). About half (54%) rated the training as excellent; a further 32% saw it as “very good.”

Impact of the student training program:

Every single respondent (100%) felt the student training rendered students more sensitized and educated about bullying, and 72% said students were now more enthusiastic about pursuing anti-bullying goals or programs. When comparing the student facilitations (leadership training program) with assembly programs, every school that received student facilitations felt that the program encourages better student enthusiasm and buy-in for anti-bullying programs, when compared to an assembly; and 100% said the program is more likely to produce long-term results.

All the schools liked the facilitation (leadership training program); 45% said the facilitation was excellent; and 55% said it was very good. Most (82%) said the college students were “very good” at connecting with their younger peers.

Of the schools that received assemblies, most (89%) felt it was interesting and engaging; 92% felt it successfully raised awareness.

Impact of the Parent Presentations program:

The parent presentations faced the common problems of encouraging attendance and coping with an overwhelming demand. One impact of cyberbullying has been to increase the need for parental education and awareness. The MARC Parent presentation program focused on both bullying and cyberbullying prevention and specifically on how parents can help reduce these behaviors. This approach was successful: of the respondents, 80% characterized feedback from parents as “very positive” and 100% characterized the presentation as “very useful,” in that the topics were helpful in the school’s quest to reduce bullying.