

SDDFS NOTES

2002 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey School Data

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Special Points of Interest:

- The FYSAS measures drug use, delinquency indicators, and risk /protective factors.
- Florida needs to improve on the protective factor “School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement”
- Risk/protective factors in the individual-peer domain have the strongest association with alcohol use.
- Grouping high-risk adolescents together can actually hinder the goals of a prevention program in some cases.

What is the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey?

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) effort was initiated in 2000 and is administered every spring, with data collected from middle and high schools across the state. The sampling strategy is designed to be representative at the overall state and county levels for surveys administered in even years (2000, 2002) and at the state level in odd years (2001, 2003).

The survey asks questions about alcohol and drug use, delinquent behaviors, and risk and protective factors that relate to drug use and delinquent behaviors.

What are risk and protective factors?

Risk factors are conditions that increase the chances of youth becoming involved in drug use and other delinquent behav-

iors. Protective factors are considered to be conditions that buffer youth from risk through changing responses to risk or reducing the impact of risks (Channing-Bete, 2002).

Risk and protective factors are divided into four domains: individual-peer, family, school, and community.

The purpose of this newsletter is to look at Florida’s 2002 scores on the risk/protective factors in the school domain and to discuss the relationship between risk/protective factors and alcohol use.

For drug prevalence rates, specific methodology, and more risk and protective factor scores, see the FYSAS state and county reports online at:

www.myflorida.com/drugcontrol

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A Closer Look at the Risk and Protective Factors in the School Domain

Percentile ranks are used to assess how Florida compares to a national sample. A scale was developed for this comparison with a national median of 50. This means that 50% of the respondents in this comparative sample score above the median and 50% score below. Risk factor scores for Florida that are above 50 indicate a higher risk than the national sample. Higher scores on risk factors means more risk present, so lower scores are more desirable. Conversely, higher scores for protection indicate more protection is present. Therefore, it is better to have scores above the national median for protective factors.

The two risk factors measured within the school domain are:

- Academic Failure
- Low School Commitment.

The two protective factors measured within the school domain are:

- School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement
- School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement.

Risk

Florida scores a 52 for both Academic Failure and Low School Commitment, which is slightly above the national median. [Continued Next Page](#)

A Closer Look at the Risk and Protective Factors in the School Domain (continued from pg. 1)

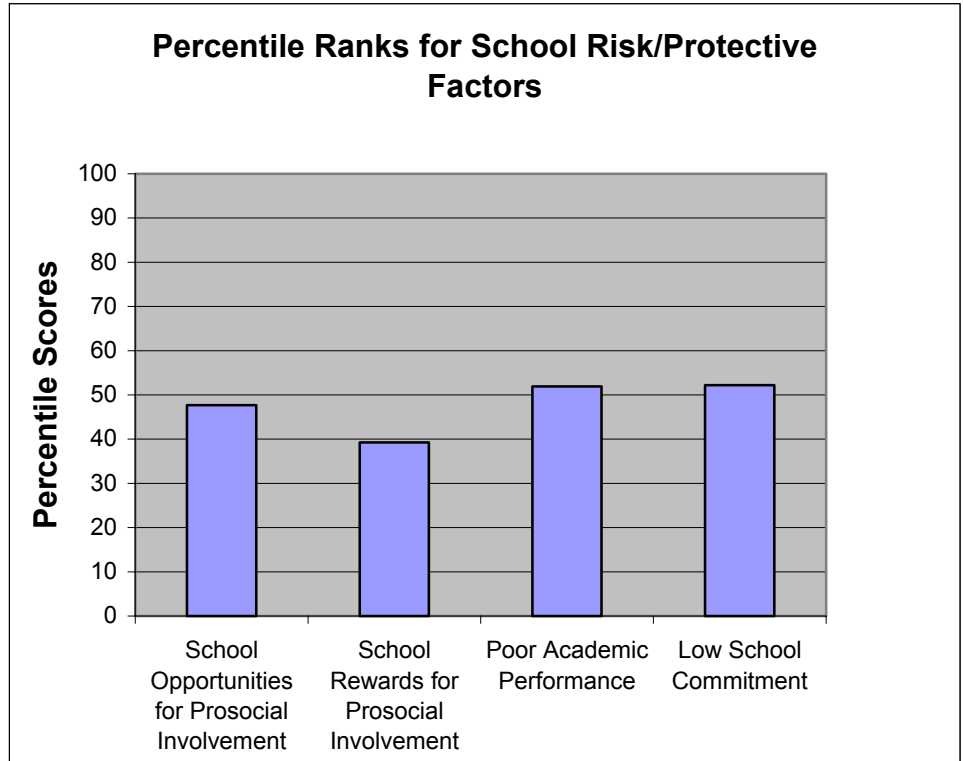
However, fortunately Academic Failure has decreased from 2000, going from a score of 58 to 52.

Protection

Florida scores a 48 on School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement, which means that students are slightly below the national median.

School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement, with a low score of 39, is the factor that needs the most improvement in Florida. This means that 61% of the national sample scored higher on this protective factor.

For a complete list of the school questions, see Appendix A. For percentile ranks by county, see Appendix C.



Which Risk and Protective Factors are Related the Most to Alcohol Use?

Preliminary findings obtained from an exploratory analysis of the 2002 data suggest that there are several key factors in the *individual-peer domain* and one factor in the *family domain* that have the strongest association with alcohol use. In the current analysis, all of the risk/protective factors were entered into the model and the factors showing the most influence on alcohol use are listed below. This model does not address causality, but rather looks at the relationship between the R/P factors and alcohol use. In addition, addressing all of the identified factors, as well as all other factors in all domains, will have a much larger impact on alcohol use than any single risk/protective factor. For important methodology issues to consider for this analysis, see Appendix D.

There are five risk factors and one protective factor that have the strongest link with both middle and high school student alcohol use. To see sample survey items for the factors below, see Appendix B. The order of importance for these factors varies between middle and high school.

The five risk factors that influence alcohol use most are:

- Early Initiation to Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior

- Friends' Use of Drugs
- Favorable Attitudes Toward ATOD Use
- Sensation Seeking
- Parental Attitudes Favorable Towards Drug Use

The one protective factor that influences alcohol the most is:

- Social Skills

Middle School

For middle school students, the risk factor "*Early Initiation to Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior*" has the strongest association with alcohol use. Other important risk factors for middle schoolers are: "*Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Drug Use*," "*Favorable Attitudes toward Drug Use*," and "*Friends' Use of Drugs*". "*Social Skills*" and "*Sensation Seeking*" have less of an impact for this age group.

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Which Risk/Protective Factors are the most Related to Alcohol Use?

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High School Students

The most critical factors effecting alcohol use for high schoolers are “*Social Skills*,” “*Early Initiation*,” and “*Sensation Seeking*”. “*Friends’ Use of Drugs*,” “*Favorable Attitudes Toward ATOD*,” and “*Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward ATOD Use*” still have an impact, but less than for middle school students.

Are There Programs That Can Address These Risk/Protective Factors?

A thorough review of available programs is beyond the scope of this newsletter. However, there are some interesting points to be made.

The following program information was obtained from an article by Hawkins and Catalano (1992) which describes risk/protective factors and available programs.

Social influences on drug use are the most salient risk factors at the point of drug use initiation, which when addressed effectively, should reduce drug use immediately.

A few of the most prominent factors in our analyses have to do with social influences:

- Early Initiation to Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior
- Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use
- Friends’ Use of Drugs

The other factors in our analyses, “*Social Skills*” and “*Sensation Seeking*,” are also related to social influences.

Social influence resistance strategies are usually classroom-based skills training for grades 5th-10th, but most often grades 6th and 7th are targeted. Students receive training through instruction, modeling, and role-play to identify and resist influences to drug use and to prepare for the stresses involved with such resistance.

These programs may seek to promote negative norms toward drug use through strategies such as: depicting drug use as socially unacceptable, discussing the negative consequences of drug use, providing evidence that drug use is not so common among peers, or using peer leaders to teach the curriculum. Peer-led interventions have been shown to reduce drug use more compared to teacher-led programs in some studies, which may be a result of the peer leader setting the norm for the classroom that is antithetical to drug use.

Social influences resistance training (refusal skills) has also included the training of other skills such as: prob-

lem-solving and decision-making skills, self-control and self-efficacy skills, social and assertiveness skills, and coping strategies for stress.

In a recent NIDA-funded study (Williams, 2003), it was found that grouping high-risk and antisocial adolescents together, can inadvertently reinforce problem behavior (Williams, J.S., 2003). Although the effects of peer-reinforcement are thought to be a positive benefit, they can hinder the training due to a concept called “deviance training.” Rule-breaking discussions about drug use that receive positive responses from antisocial peers, can further encourage such behavior among peers. Interactions before and after sessions and during breaks can further negate the positive interactions that went on during sessions. This is not to say that all programs grouping adolescents together will have a negative effect, but more research is needed to understand which situations are problematic.

The following link provides a list of programs available and recommended by the Department of Education:

www.unf.edu/dept/fie/sdfs



Florida Data Commentary: “Using Prevention Science to Improve Student Achievement”

By
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The Channing-Bete Company

As school staff, you have made a significant commitment in time and resources...time, that some people would say, was needlessly diverted from student instruction, to administer the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey. Given the dramatic pressures that schools are facing to raise student test scores, it is extremely important to understand that your risk and protective factor data, contained in your survey report, also has real significance for improving student performance. Unfortunately, in too many instances, schools and communities receive their survey findings, look at the drug usage data, design and implement a prevention plan, and then place the findings on the shelf and miss the significance of their data as it relates to academic achievement. The reality is that this prevention science survey is rich with information that can and should assist schools, students, families and communities in raising student achievement as well as in reducing risk factors associated with violence and alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Please note that I included students, families and communities as partners with schools in addressing these issues. I say this because, as prevention science researchers have pointed out, if you look at your findings, you will note that risk and protective factor data is broken out according to the domains from where they emanate. Those domains are community, family, schools, and individuals/peers. This is significant because we are seeing that policy makers are beginning to understand that with drug use, there are many factors inside and outside schools, that can contribute to violence and to our students using drugs. Your risk factor data will graphically illustrate that and policy makers are making strides in broadening the focus, responsibility and accountability to go beyond just schools when it comes to reducing drug usage. However, the relationship of risk and protective factors to academic achievement has not been universally recognized. Given this reality, as you study your risk factor data, I would like you to consider the following questions:

- ❖ How many of these risk factors can schools realistically address by themselves?
- ❖ How many of the risk factors identified in the survey interfere with a child’s ability to learn?
- ❖ What are you doing to help better understand the specific needs/risk factors of your school? How are you informing your community members of these specific issues/needs that are impacting your students?
- ❖ Does your school improvement plan include a needs assessment that speaks to any of these issues?
- ❖ Does your school or school district have a plan for taking these risk factors into account as it develops its outcome goals?
- ❖ Does your plan have a strategy for engaging other community resources to support your students? If so, how are those efforts being measured?
- ❖ What is your school district doing to demonstrate that not all schools are on a level playing field?
- ❖ How are you nurturing community members to be advocates for the needs of your students and schools?

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Florida Data Commentary:

“Using Prevention Science to Improve Student Achievement”

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A key point that I am obviously trying to make is that if you really stop to think about the risk factors, you soon recognize that virtually every risk factor that has been identified and quantified, is, in fact, a barrier to learning. If your district has administered the survey, you have a wealth of data that can objectively identify a variety of conditions that can influence a child’s ability to learn. By utilizing prevention science principles, your survey data will help you more effectively assess or diagnose the needs of your students and appropriately prescribe interventions to support them.

Related to this, as you study your data, it should become clear that it is also unrealistic to expect student achievement to improve when your school improvement plan only addresses instructional and resource management concerns and overlooks, trivializes and/or minimizes the importance of addressing the assorted barriers to learning. With all of this in mind, it becomes clear that there are numerous issues and concerns, some within the school and many outside of the school, that need to be addressed if we, as a society, are truly sincere about raising safe and healthy students and improving student achievement.

As I say this, let me emphasize, as the data typically illustrates, just like it is unrealistic to expect schools to reduce violence or drug abuse by themselves, it is equally unrealistic and unfair to place the entire burden or responsibility of raising student performance solely on the schools. Policy makers need to embrace this reality and that can best be achieved when they become cognizant of the issues and conditions facing students, their families and their schools. Therefore it is incumbent on you as school staff to carefully look and think about the implications of your data, and develop ways to inform and engage your key community leaders so that they, and the groups they represent, become knowledgeable partners in implementing and supporting school improvement plans. These leaders and their groups, once they become informed of the issues and needs of students, typically become some of the most diligent supporters of students and schools as well as effective communicators to policy makers. When this occurs, we can expect to see the implementation of policies that more accurately reflect what is needed to improve student achievement. Together, you can take action that creates a truly comprehensive school and student improvement plan...one that embraces prevention as an integral part of student achievement...one that reaches out and involves your greater community to more effectively address the diverse and varied needs of the students that you serve.



Appendix A: 2002 FYSAS School Risk/Protective Factors Sample Survey Items

Academic Failure (Risk Factor)

	A's	B's	C's	D's	F's
Putting them all together, what were your grades like last year?	30 %	40 %	24 %	4 %	2 %
	Yes	No			
Are your grades better than the grades of most students in your class? ^a	62 %	38 %			

a. The Yes and No categories have been collapsed and originally included "Somewhat Agree" and "Somewhat Disagree"

Low Commitment to School (Risk Factor)

	Always	Sometimes	Never
How often do you feel that the school work you are assigned is meaningful and important? ^a	34 %	43 %	23 %
	Very	Fairly	Very Dull
How interesting are most of your courses to you? ^b	30 %	42 %	29 %
	Very	Fairly	Not At All
How important do you think the things you are learning in school are going to be for your later life? ^c	59 %	24 %	17 %
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Now, thinking back over the past year in school, how often did you ^d			
Enjoy being in school?	39 %	38 %	24 %
Hate being in school?	32 %	33 %	35 %
Try to do your best work?	75 %	19 %	6 %
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6+ days
During the last four weeks how many whole days have you missed.....			
Because you skipped or "cut"?	91 %	6 %	3 %
For other reasons?	83 %	13 %	4 %

a. "Always" originally included "Almost Always" and "Often"; "Never" included "Seldom" and "Never"

b. "Very" originally included "Quite" and "Very"; "Very Dull" included "Dull" and "Very Dull"

c. "Very" originally included "Quite" and "Very"; "Not At All" included "Slightly" and "Not At All"

d. "Always" included "Often" and "Always"; "Never" originally included "Seldom" and "Never"

Appendix A: 2002 FYSAS School Risk/Protective Factors Sample Survey Items

School Opportunities For Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor) ^a

	Yes	No
In my school, students have lots of chances to help decide things like class activities and rules.	41 %	59 %
There are lots of chances for students in my school to talk with a teacher one-on-one.	70 %	30 %
Teachers ask me to work on special classroom projects.	45 %	55 %
There are lots of chances for students in my school to get involved in sports, clubs, and other school activities outside of class	88 %	12 %
I have lots of chances to be a part of class discussions or activities	75 %	25 %

a. "Yes" originally included "Almost Always" and "Often"; "No" included "Seldom" and "Never"

School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor) ^a

	Yes	No
My teachers notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it	64 %	36 %
The school lets my parents know when I have done something well	27 %	73 %
I feel safe at my school	69 %	31 %
My teachers praise me when I work hard in school	44 %	56 %

a. "Yes" originally included "Somewhat Agree" and "Agree"; "No" included "Somewhat Disagree" and "Disagree"

Appendix B: 2002 FYSAS Sample Survey Items From the Factors in the Individual-Peer and Family Domains that Have the Strongest Association With Alcohol Use

Peer and Individual Domain		
Protective Factor	Scale	Sample Survey Item(s)
Social Skills	Social Skills	Vignette about what the youth would do if he or she were handed an alcoholic beverage at a party.
Risk Factor	Scale	Sample Survey Item(s)
Friends' Delinquent Behavior and Use of Drugs	Friends' Delinquent Behavior	Think of your <u>four best friends</u> . In the past year, how many of your best friends have dropped out of school?
	Friends' Use of Drugs	Think of your <u>four best friends</u> . In the past year, how many of your best friends have smoked cigarettes?
Favorable Attitudes toward ATOD* Use	Favorable Attitudes toward ATOD Use	How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to smoke cigarettes?
Early Initiation (of Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior)	Early Initiation (of Drug Use and Antisocial Behavior)	How old were you when you first began drinking alcoholic beverages regularly, that is, at least once or twice a month?
Sensation Seeking	Sensation Seeking	How many times have you done something dangerous because someone dared you to do it?

Family Domain		
Risk Factor	Scale	Sample Survey Item(s)
Parental Attitudes Favorable toward ATOD Use and Antisocial Behavior	Parental Attitudes Favorable toward ATOD Use	How wrong do your parents feel it would be for <u>you</u> to smoke cigarettes?
	Parental Attitudes Favorable toward Antisocial Behavior	How wrong do your parents feel it would be for <u>you</u> to steal anything worth more than \$5?

* ATOD means alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Appendix C: 2002 FYSAS Risk and Protective Factor Percentile Ranks by County

County	Average Protection	Average Risk	School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	Academic Failure	Low Commitment to School
Alachua	50	50	47.7	40.6	51.5	52.0
Baker	52	49	52.1	45.3	49.5	51.6
Bay	50	50	48.2	40.4	50.4	51.8
Bradford	49	50	47.4	34.9	50.7	52.1
Brevard	49	51	46.5	41.5	45.3	54.7
Broward	49	50	49.2	39.1	52.8	50.9
Calhoun	52	50	50.3	48.9	51.3	55.6
Charlotte	46	55	45.8	39.3	52.6	56.6
Citrus	52	51	51.6	46.5	46.5	49.6
Clay	49	52	46.9	36.6	56.1	57.8
Collier	48	50	51.0	42.5	48.2	51.6
Columbia	50	50	47.8	38.2	54.1	51.3
DeSoto	48	51	45.6	44.6	48.8	48.3
Dixie	50	51	50.8	41.3	48.3	49.2
Duval	46	51	44.3	33.4	56.5	53.6
Escambia	49	51	45.9	40.5	49.5	54.6
Flagler	47	53	44.1	38.5	50.3	56.6
Franklin***	48	54	47.1	39.1	56.0	53.7
Gadsden	50	50	50.1	42.2	52.8	42.6
Gilchrist	48	52	45.5	42.1	52.9	56.2
Glades**	50	51	51.5	47.3	55.9	46.7
Gulf	52	52	51.7	43.8	49.9	54.1
Hamilton***	49	49	40.0	38.1	44.0	45.4
Hardee	50	48	48.9	42.1	50.0	48.2
Hendry*	--	---	--	--	--	--
Hernando	45	53	42.3	34.3	52.4	58.7
Highlands	50	49	46.7	39.1	50.2	51.3
Hillsborough	50	50	49.1	41.0	51.7	51.9
Holmes	49	50	44.1	39.6	52.0	55.0
Indian River	49	52	49.3	44.5	49.1	52.7
Jackson	50	50	44.0	40.5	50.0	55.4
Jefferson***	49	51	45.9	38.8	57.1	46.5
Lafayette***	56	48	56.2	49.2	53.0	50.2
Lake	47	52	42.4	36.3	49.7	55.5
Lee	47	52	44.2	35.3	53.2	56.0
Leon**	51	49	46.6	38.5	47.5	53.8
Levy	51	50	52.7	46.4	55.8	49.7
Liberty***	53	50	50.1	46.0	52.9	58.9
Madison***	50	51	52.4	44.0	53.9	44.1
Manatee	48	52	45.7	38.6	50.2	53.3
Marion	48	53	45.2	39.8	53.3	52.6

Appendix C: 2002 FYSAS Risk and Protective Factor Percentile Ranks by County

County	Average Protection	Average Risk	School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	Academic Failure	Low Commitment to School
Martin	47	53	42.5	34.2	48.4	57.1
Miami-Dade	47	48	48.8	44.2	55.8	48.5
Monroe	46	54	43.8	40.6	51.1	58.1
Nassau	48	52	44.6	37.0	52.1	55.8
Okaloosa*	--	--	--	--	--	--
Okeechobee	48	51	46.6	40.3	53.0	51.9
Orange	50	49	51.3	41.0	49.1	49.5
Osceola	48	50	47.6	37.7	50.0	52.8
Palm Beach	47	51	48.0	40.5	50.8	51.9
Pasco	49	52	48.7	41.0	50.7	53.6
Pinellas	47	52	45.8	37.2	51.2	57.4
Polk	48	49	46.4	39.2	50.4	53.0
Putnam	48	52	43.0	39.2	49.5	53.9
Saint Johns	50	50	46.6	41.4	50.4	56.9
Saint Lucie*	--	--	--	--	--	--
Santa Rosa	51	50	47.2	42.5	48.0	55.4
Sarasota	47	51	46.0	41.1	50.2	57.4
Seminole	52	47	50.9	41.3	50.5	46.5
Sumter	50	51	46.9	41.9	51.7	48.9
Suwannee	49	52	43.4	39.3	53.7	53.4
Taylor	54	51	53.0	42.0	50.8	51.8
Union	53	48	49.4	39.1	48.1	53.0
Volusia	47	53	44.5	38.6	52.7	55.5
Wakulla	47	54	45.9	37.7	53.0	57.1
Walton	49	52	44.2	43.6	52.7	54.1
Washington**	51	48	45.5	43.5	52.7	52.3
Florida	48	50	48	39	52	52

* No schools from Hendry, Okaloosa or Saint Lucie Counties participated in the 2002 survey.

** No 12th graders from Glades, Leon or Washington Counties participated in the 2002 survey. Estimates do not include 12th grade for these counties.

***Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Liberty and Madison Counties sampled students in all grades, but the sample sizes were quite small, resulting in relatively large margins of error for these counties.

Appendix D

Important Methodology Issues to Consider for the Current Analysis

The current analysis is a multiple regression, which controls for the effects of the other factors (taken into account) while looking at each individual factor one at a time. One cannot simply look at the correlation between each risk/protective factor and drug use. Another consideration is that we are not fully aware of all the factors that relate to alcohol use, as well as how those factors relate to each other. This is demonstrated in the results of our analysis: all of the risk/protective factors additively account for about 40% of the variation of alcohol use. This leaves another 60% of the variation of alcohol use as being unknown for this particular model.

The current analysis does not indicate any kind of causal relationships. In order to assess causality, it would be necessary to conduct experimental research or to have a very solid theory in mind to build a statistical model to analyze this. In order to build this solid theory, more research, specifically longitudinal research is needed. Longitudinal research would consist of measuring risk/protective factors among children and following them into late adolescence or early adulthood in order to measure drug use outcomes.

It may be that the increase of certain risk/protective factors (antecedent variables) can cause the increase of other risk/protective factors. Therefore, through longitudinal studies it could be discovered not only which risk/protective factors cause drug use, but also which risk/protective factors potentiate other risk/protective factors.

Another theoretical/data issue to consider is the bi-directional nature of the risk/protective factors and alcohol use. The current analysis assumes that the risk/protective factors are occurring before the outcome, alcohol use. However, for many risk/protective factors this may not be the case. Consider the risk factor "Low School Commitment": it may be that a student with low school commitment may be more likely to experiment with alcohol use, or it could be that engaging in alcohol use results in the student being less committed to school. This type of data requires a more complex analysis, based on a solid theory.

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The members of the SDDFS staff, as well as the staff of the Safe Schools Office at the Department of Education, stand ready to provide support through training and technical assistance to schools and school districts. Please encourage educators to take advantage of our services. For additional information on these resources or to find out how to access these resources, please contact Patricia Elton at (850) 414-0236 (SunCom 994-0236) or by email at elton_p@popmail.firn.edu.

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