

Texas School Survey Of Drug And Alcohol Use

Dripping Springs ISD

Elementary Executive Summary

Introduction

The Texas School Survey is an annual collection of self-reported tobacco, alcohol, inhalant, and substance use data from among elementary and/or secondary students in individual districts throughout the state of Texas. The survey, conducted by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) in conjunction with the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), is also administered every other year to a representative sample of Texas students in grades 4 through 6 and grades 7 through 12.

Data from the statewide sampling, last administered in the Spring of 2000, are incorporated into an over-time database maintained by TCADA to track trends in substance use so that policymakers at the state level have up-to-date information upon which to base decisions and plot prevention strategies. These data also serve as an overall standard of comparison for use by those at the district level to interpret, and act upon, local survey findings in a similar way.

The executive summary begins with a section containing a general demographic overview of those who took the survey in the participating district. This is followed by sections dealing with the various substances covered by the survey---tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, and marijuana. The summary concludes with a section that explores selected characteristics associated with substance use in the district and a final one dealing with where students come by what they know about drugs and alcohol and to whom they might turn if they thought they were having a problem.

For context, each section dealing with substance use will begin with a brief, over-time glimpse of the statewide trends in the 1990's with regard to that substance. This is followed by a subsection containing items that are generally recognized as contributing to the environment in which substance use is most likely to occur---such as availability, peer use, and parental attitudes. Finally, the use data are then detailed.

As for the actual, self-reported use of each substance, it is important to note the frequency of such use. Is it experimental, a once-in-a-lifetime thing? Or is it a more casual use, a once-in-a-while behavior? Further, use data are used to differentiate between those who smoke cigarettes from those who use a smokeless tobacco product, those who drink beer from those who drink wine coolers, those who sniff correction fluid from those who sniff glue.

Two final points should be noted about the data. First, due to the differences in rounding procedures, there may be slight discrepancies between the percentages referred to in the tables and those reflected in the executive summary. Second, some data in this report are marked with an asterisk. Data so marked are estimated to be statistically significant at the .01 level from the comparable data for the

state as a whole. This means that in only one of a hundred samples would a difference this large have occurred when there was no difference between the district and state data. Differences in very small districts will seldom be statistically significant due to the small number of cases. Differences that are not marked may be important, but should be treated with more caution than those that are statistically significant.

The percentages referred to in the executive summary that follows were taken from the tables found in "Part I: District Survey Results."

Demographic Overview

In the Spring of 2002, The Texas School Survey was administered to students in grade 6 in the Dripping Springs Independent School District (DSISD). Texas School Survey protocols, formulated to ensure that the data used in this analysis has an acceptable probability of error, called for the district to administer the survey to all of the elementary students. The accuracy of the data requires that school staff administering the survey followed the protocols.

A total of 234 students completed the questionnaire. Of that number, 28 surveys were excluded from analysis because students did not indicate their grade or age, or because they were identified as exaggerators (i.e., claimed to have used a non-existent drug or reported overly excessive drug use). The final number of surveys included in the overall district analysis was 206, consisting of:

- A nearly even split of male (46 percent) and female (54 percent) students;
- An ethnic breakdown that is 84 percent white, 10 percent Mexican-American, 1 percent African-American, 1 percent Asian-American, 1 percent Native American, and 4 percent other;
- Seventy-nine percent who say they live in a two-parent home, and 23 percent who report they have lived in the district for three or more years; and
- Seventy percent who say their parent(s) are college graduates, and 11 percent who indicate they qualify for free/reduced lunches at school.

Tobacco

General tobacco use includes both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

Statewide Overview. In 1990, a quarter of Texas 6th grade students reported having experimented with a tobacco product at least once during their lifetimes, while close to a fifth said they had used such a product during the past school year. These percentages inched downward over the next eight years and then dropped dramatically in the 2000 and 2002 assessments. These most recent drops would appear to be more prevalent with regard to cigarette use than with regard to the use of the smokeless variety.

District Overview. Overall, the general use of tobacco products among Dripping Springs ISD 6th grade students in 2002 was somewhat lower than that reported by their counterparts statewide, although only one of the differences---close friends who smoke cigarettes---was statistically significant.

Environment. Thirteen* percent of district elementary students said some or most of their close friends smoke cigarettes (25 percent statewide), while 21 percent reported they had been offered cigarettes (25 percent statewide). Four percent of DSISD elementary students reported some or most of their close friends use snuff or chewing tobacco (7 percent statewide), and 9 percent said they had been offered a smokeless tobacco product (8 percent statewide).

The influence of drug education programs may be reflected in students' attitudes toward the use of specific substances. Sixty-nine percent of district elementary students believe tobacco use is "very dangerous" (67 percent statewide).

Use. In the Dripping Springs ISD, 10 percent of elementary students reported general tobacco use at least once during their lifetimes (14 percent statewide). Use of a tobacco product during the past school year was reported by 4 percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students (8 percent statewide).

Eight percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students reported smoking cigarettes at least once during their lifetimes (13 percent statewide), and 3 percent said they had smoked cigarettes during the past school year (7 percent statewide). Lifetime use of smokeless tobacco products was reported by 3 percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students (3 percent statewide), while 1 percent said they had used snuff or chewing tobacco during the past school year (1 percent statewide).

Alcohol

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among elementary students statewide and in the Dripping Springs ISD.

Statewide Overview. In 1990, well over half of Texas 6th grade students (57 percent) said they had experimented with an alcohol product at some point in their lives. Over the next two years, the rate of lifetime alcohol use dropped dramatically, to less than half, and continued to move steadily downward by a couple of percentage points per assessment through the 2002 statewide survey, as a third of the 6th graders indicated experimental alcohol use. As the 90's began, 38 percent of Texas students in grade 6 reported having consumed alcohol during the past school year. The rate of past-year alcohol use also dropped dramatically over the next two years, then spiked up in 1994, and then steadily declined through the 2002 statewide assessment, as just over a fifth of these students indicated past-year alcohol use.

District Overview. Overall, Dripping Springs ISD 6th grade students were drinking alcohol in 2002 at rates lower than those reported by their counterparts statewide, including significant differences with regard to close friends who drink, obtaining alcohol from friends, lifetime alcohol use, and two or more drinks at one sitting of wine or beer.

Environment. Twenty-five* percent of Dripping Springs elementary students said some or most of their close friends drink beer, wine coolers, wine, or liquor (36 percent statewide), and 28 percent reported they had been offered alcohol (35 percent statewide).

DSISD elementary students who said they drink alcohol were asked where they obtain such beverages. Fourteen percent of district elementary students said they get alcohol from home (15 percent statewide), 3* percent reported obtaining alcohol from friends (8 percent statewide), and 5* percent said they get alcohol from "somewhere else" (13 percent statewide).

Parental attitudes can be a major factor in whether or not a student uses alcohol or drugs. When asked how their parents feel about kids their age drinking beer, 86 percent of DSISD elementary students said their parents "don't like it" (80 percent statewide). Eleven percent of district elementary students said they "don't know" how their parents feel about kids their age drinking beer (16 percent statewide), and 3 percent said their parents "don't care" if kids their age drink beer (3 percent statewide).

Sixty-nine percent of Dripping Springs elementary students believe alcohol use is "very dangerous" (62 percent statewide).

Use. Twenty-four* percent of DSISD elementary students reported using alcohol at least once during their lifetimes (34 percent statewide). Alcohol use during the past school year was reported by 18 percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students (22 percent statewide).

Nine* percent of DSISD elementary students said they "had two or more drinks" of wine in a row (15 percent statewide), 7* percent said they "had two or more drinks" of wine cooler in a row at least once during the past year (17 percent statewide), 6* percent said they "had two or more drinks" of beer in a row at least once during the past year (15 percent statewide), and 6 percent said they "had two or more drinks" of liquor in a row at least once in the past year (8 percent statewide).

Marijuana

Statewide Overview. The prevalence rates among Texas 6th grade students reporting experimental and past-year use of marijuana were at their lowest points in 1992---when 3 percent indicated experimental use and 2 percent reported more recent use. Over the next two years, the lifetime rate tripled to 9 percent and the past-year rate doubled to 4 percent. The rate Texas students in grade 6 indicating experimental use inched downward through the next two assessments, dipped sharply in 2000 to 6 percent, and inched downward further in the most recent statewide assessment. As for past-year marijuana use, the rising trend continued through 1996 (5 percent), and has then inched downward through each successive statewide assessment.

District Overview. Overall, marijuana use among Dripping Springs ISD 6th grade students in 2002 was slightly lower than that reported by their counterparts statewide, although none of the differences were statistically significant.

Environment. Twelve percent of DSISD elementary students said some or most of their close friends use marijuana (16 percent statewide), and 13 percent reported they had been offered marijuana (13 percent statewide).

When asked about parental attitudes toward marijuana use, 89 percent of DSISD elementary students said their parents "don't like it" when kids their age smoke marijuana (86 percent statewide), while 10 percent said that they "don't know" how their parents feel (12 percent statewide), and 1 percent reported their parents "don't care" if kids their age smoke marijuana (2 percent statewide).

When questioned about the danger associated with marijuana use, 82 percent of Dripping Springs elementary students believe that using marijuana is "very dangerous" (80 percent statewide).

Use. Three percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetimes (5 percent statewide). Two percent of DSISD elementary students reported using marijuana during the past school year (4 percent statewide).

Inhalants

In general, inhalants are common, licit substances (paints and thinners, correction fluid, glue, and gasoline) which, when sniffed, huffed, or inhaled produce an intoxicating effect. Lifetime and past-year inhalant use percentages have been adjusted to reflect reported use of both specific inhalants and inhalant use generally. This adjustment was made because some students responded positive to specific use without responding positive to generic use, while some students responded positive to generic use but not to specific inhalants.

Statewide Overview. As the 90's began, nearly a quarter of Texas 6th grade students (24 percent) reported experimental inhalant use and nearly a fifth (18 percent) indicated past-year use of such substances. These rates held steady through 1992, then were cut nearly in half in the 1994 statewide assessment. These rates rebounded slightly in 1996, spiked sharply in 1998, and have been inching downward again through the last two statewide assessments.

District Overview. Overall, use of inhalants among Dripping Springs ISD 6th grade students in 2002 was somewhat similar to that reported by their peers statewide.

Environment. Fifteen percent of Dripping Springs students said some or most of their close friends use inhalants (16 percent statewide), and 10 percent said they had been offered inhalants (12 percent statewide). Sixty-five percent of DSISD elementary students believe inhalant use is "very dangerous" (64 percent statewide).

Use. Eight percent of DSISD elementary students reported using inhalants at least once during their lifetimes (11 percent statewide). Seven percent of Dripping Springs elementary students said they had used inhalants during the past school year (8 percent statewide). Three percent of Dripping Springs elementary students reported using two or more inhalant substances at least once during their lifetimes (5 percent statewide).

Two percent of district elementary students reported inhaling whiteout/correction fluid (5 percent statewide), 2 percent indicated they had inhaled glue (3 percent statewide), 1 percent reported inhaling spray paint (3 percent statewide), 1 percent said they had inhaled gasoline (3 percent statewide), 1 percent indicated they had inhaled paint thinner (2 percent statewide), and 6 percent said they had used substances in the "other inhalants" category (5 percent statewide) at least once during their lifetimes.

Characteristics Associated With Drug Use

In the statewide survey, female elementary students were less likely to have used tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, or marijuana than were male elementary students. In the Dripping Springs ISD, male elementary students were somewhat more likely to have used an inhalant than were district female elementary students. There were no significant differences by gender among DSISD elementary students with regard to the use of tobacco products, alcohol or marijuana.

Drug and Alcohol Information

The influence of drug education programs may be reflected in students' attitudes toward the use of the specific substances reported above. Eighty-two* percent of Dripping Springs ISD elementary students said they had gotten information about drugs and alcohol from a school source since classes began in the Fall (90 percent statewide). Sixty-three* percent of DSISD elementary students reported getting information about drugs and alcohol from a school assembly program (56 percent statewide), 52* percent said their teacher was a source for this information (70 percent statewide), and 33* percent said a visitor to class was a source for information about drugs and alcohol (57 percent statewide).