

Arizona Youth Survey  
Barriers to

*Learning*

A Report From the 2002 Arizona Youth Survey

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Statistical Analysis Center



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# What the Arizona Youth Survey Reveals About Barriers to Learning

Students in Arizona face unique challenges that can prevent them from succeeding in an educational environment. Identifying these challenges is essential to developing strategies to prevent these challenges from adversely affecting student achievement. Arizona policy makers have placed an emphasis on addressing shortcomings in the education system through increased resources and targeting problem areas. Governor Napolitano identified “supporting children and education on all levels” as one of her top five long-term priorities in 2003. Nationally, there has been a push for states to improve student performance in measurable ways. The emphasis that is now being placed on measuring student performance both from a state and national level places a renewed spotlight on analyzing the challenges students in Arizona face.

One primary question to answer then is “what are the specific challenges facing youth in Arizona that prevent students from learning?” Students who participated in the Arizona Youth Survey in 2002 gave researchers a look at what factors are affecting students and how those factors are impacting students’ grades. The purpose of this report is to identify the “barriers” that could impede the ability of students to learn in an academic setting.

The 2002 Arizona Youth Survey is a survey that was created utilizing the *Communities That Care* model, a model that looks at risk and protective factors as they relate to academic achievement and supports evaluating current school barriers to learning by examining issues such as substance abuse, academic failure, school dropout rates, and violence. The survey was administered from January through February 2002 in Arizona public and charter schools. A random sample, developed in partnership with the Arizona Department of Vital Statistics, was drawn from the 15 counties, resulting in a total of 12,203 valid

surveys from 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Arizona. This report incorporates the results of that survey and therefore provides a state-wide perspective.

Schools participating in the Arizona Youth Survey are provided information identifying the risk factors that were most prevalent in their students as well as which protective factors were the lowest. As a direct result of promoting positive interventions through the reduction of risk factors, barriers to learning can be reduced resulting in an increase in academic achievement.

Identifying the risk factors at a particular school can assist that school in targeting resources more effectively, utilizing best practices that are proven to work with that population, and can assist them in obtaining needed funding in order to target the students most at-risk. Individual schools are also able to use the data from the surveys to assist in applying for Title IV grants and in mobilizing community resources to implement effective prevention interventions and strategies to reduce risk factors while enhancing protective factors.

Assessing what challenges lie before students, and which students are most likely to be affected has a tremendous advantage in allowing resources to be directed where they are most needed to increase academic achievement. Through this process, programs and policies can be developed to address the particular risk factors of an area found to be associated with school achievement.

Since much of the information that comes from the AYS is based upon the Risk and Protective Factor Model of Prevention, a brief description of the model will be presented followed by the factors that relate to the learning of Arizona youth.

## Risk and Protective Factor Model of Prevention

The Risk and Protective Factor Model has been adopted by federal and state agencies as well as local programs to guide their prevention efforts. The Risk and Protective Factor Model of Prevention is based on the simple premise that to prevent a problem from happening, it is necessary to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce those risks. Just as medical researchers have found risk factors for heart disease such as diets high in fat, lack of exercise, and smoking; a team of researchers at the University of Washington have defined a set of risk factors for youth problem behaviors. Risk factors are characteristics of school, community, and family environments, as well as characteristics of students and their peer groups that are known to predict increased likelihood of drug use, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and violent behavior among youth.

Dr. J. David Hawkins, Dr. Richard F. Catalano, and their colleagues at the University of Washington, Social Development Research Group have investigated the relationship between risk and protective factors and youth problem behavior. For example, they have found that children who live in families with high levels of conflict are more likely to become involved in problem behaviors such as delinquency and drug use than children who live in families with low levels of family conflict. Protective factors exert a positive influence or buffer against the negative influence of risk, thus reducing the likelihood that adolescents will engage in problem behaviors.

Protective factors identified through research reviewed by Drs. Hawkins and Catalano include social bonding to family, school, community, and peers; healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior; and individual characteristics. For bonding to serve as a protective influence, it must occur through involvement with peers and adults who communicate healthy values and set clear standards for behavior. Research on risk and protective factors has important implications for prevention efforts.

The premise of this approach is that in order to promote positive youth development and prevent problem behaviors, it is necessary to address those factors that predict the problem. By measuring risk and protective factors in a population, prevention programs can be implemented that will reduce the elevated risk factors and increase the protective factors. For example, if academic failure is identified as an elevated risk factor in a community, then mentoring, tutoring, and increased opportunities and rewards for classroom participation can be provided to improve academic performance.

## Arizona Youth Survey Results

The AYS provides information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use; antisocial behavior; levels of risk; and levels of protection for students in grades 8, 10, and 12. The specific ATODs and antisocial behaviors that are measured by the AYS can be seen in Figure 1. In order to examine the relationship between student academic grades and substance use, students were divided into the following four groups: “A” students, “B” students, “C” students, and students reporting grades of “D” or “F”. Students’ grades were obtained from the survey question that asked, “Putting them all together, what were your grades like last year?” The response categories were “A’s” through “F’s”. Because there were few students in the “D” and “F” categories, they were combined for the analyses presented in this report. Table 1 shows

**Table 1: What Were Your Grades Like Last Year?**

Grades	Frequency	Percent
Mostly D's and F's	896	7.6
Mostly C's	3,087	26.1
Mostly B's	4,444	37.5
Mostly A's	3,420	28.9
Total	11,847	100

the percentage of students in each of the four grade categories. The percentage of students from each grade category who used ATODs or engaged in antisocial behavior was calculated and the results presented in Figure 1. A review of the substance use and antisocial behavior percentages displayed in the charts shows that the group with the lowest percentage of use is the “A” students, and the group with the highest percentage of use is the “D” and “F” students. The relationship between grades and substance use is very consistent, with fewer “A” students using substances than “B” students, fewer “B” students using substances than “C” students, and fewer “C” students using substances than the “D” and “F” student group. A review of marijuana use, in the 30 days prior to the administration of the survey (30-day use), shows that for each change in grade level, there is a 9% increase in the use rate. For those not familiar with the information presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3, more information about how to read the charts is contained in Appendix A.

The Risk Factors that are measured by the AYS are shown in Figure 2. As with ATOD use, the “A” students are at lowest risk, and the “D” and “F” students are at highest risk. As with substance use, the relationship between grades and the risk factors is quite linear with an even increase in risk from “A” students to “D” and “F” students. More information about each of the 25 risk factor scales is contained in Appendix B.

The protective factors shown in Figure 3 also follow the same pattern with “A” students having the most protection and “D” and “F” students having the least protection. These results demonstrate that there is a clear relationship between academic achievement and the variables measured by the AYS.

A chi-square test for independence was used to explore the differences between the four grade categories discussed above on ATOD use, antisocial behavior, risk, and protection. For all measures shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3; the effect of student grades was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). Throughout the remainder of this report, all findings that were statistically significant at the  $p < .001$  level are presented. With this

level of statistical significance, the results would occur by chance only once in one-thousand times, and thus represent real differences among the grade categories.

Research on risk and protective factors has shown that they are predictive of substance use, delinquency, school dropout, and other problems that are related to success in school. The remainder of this report will explore the relationship between academic achievement, risk factors, protective factors, school dropout, delinquency, and other barriers to learning.

## Barriers to Learning

The results presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3 clearly show that the students who use substances, engage in antisocial behavior, have high levels of risk, and have low levels of protection are also the students who are more likely to have lower levels of academic achievement. The AYS contains several risk and protective factor scales that are directly related to the school domain and academic performance. The risk scales are **Academic Failure** and **Little Commitment to School**, and the protective factor scales are **Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement** and **Rewards for Pro-social Involvement**. Students who are at-risk or lack protection on these scales have a significant barrier to academic achievement as shown by the charts in Figures 2 and 3. For example, on the **Low Commitment to School** risk factor, approximately 30% of “A” students are at-risk for problem behaviors compared to 65% of “D” and “F” students. The protective factor scale of **School Rewards for Pro-social Involvement** shows a similar picture with approximately 62% of “A” students having protection from problem behaviors while 42% of “D” and “F” students have protection.

There are several individual questions on the AYS that relate to student success. The relationship between barriers to learning and school safety, associating with friends who have dropped out of school, being suspended from school, believing that school work is meaningful, and simply enjoying school are discussed in the rest of the report.

Figure 1

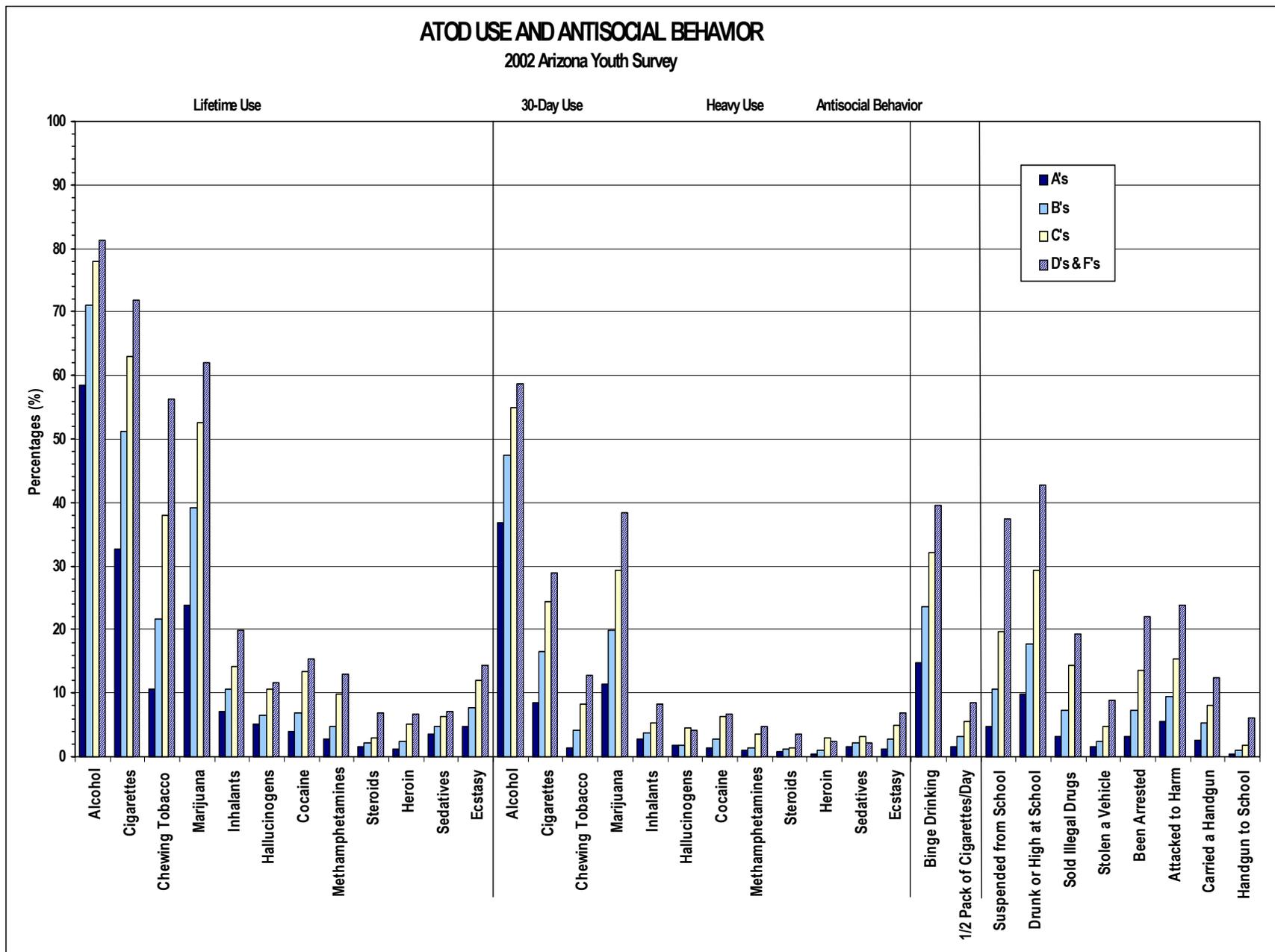


Figure 2

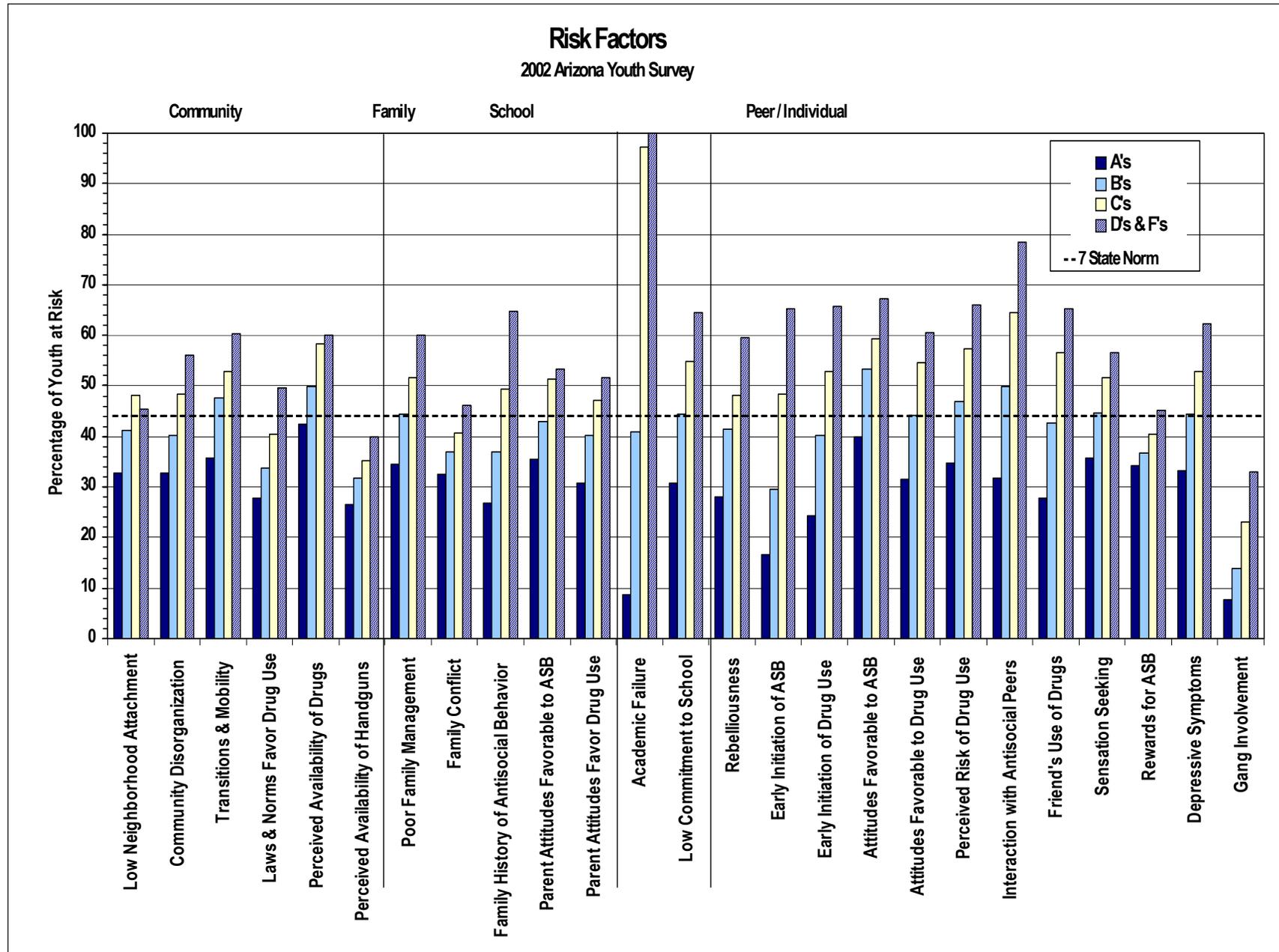
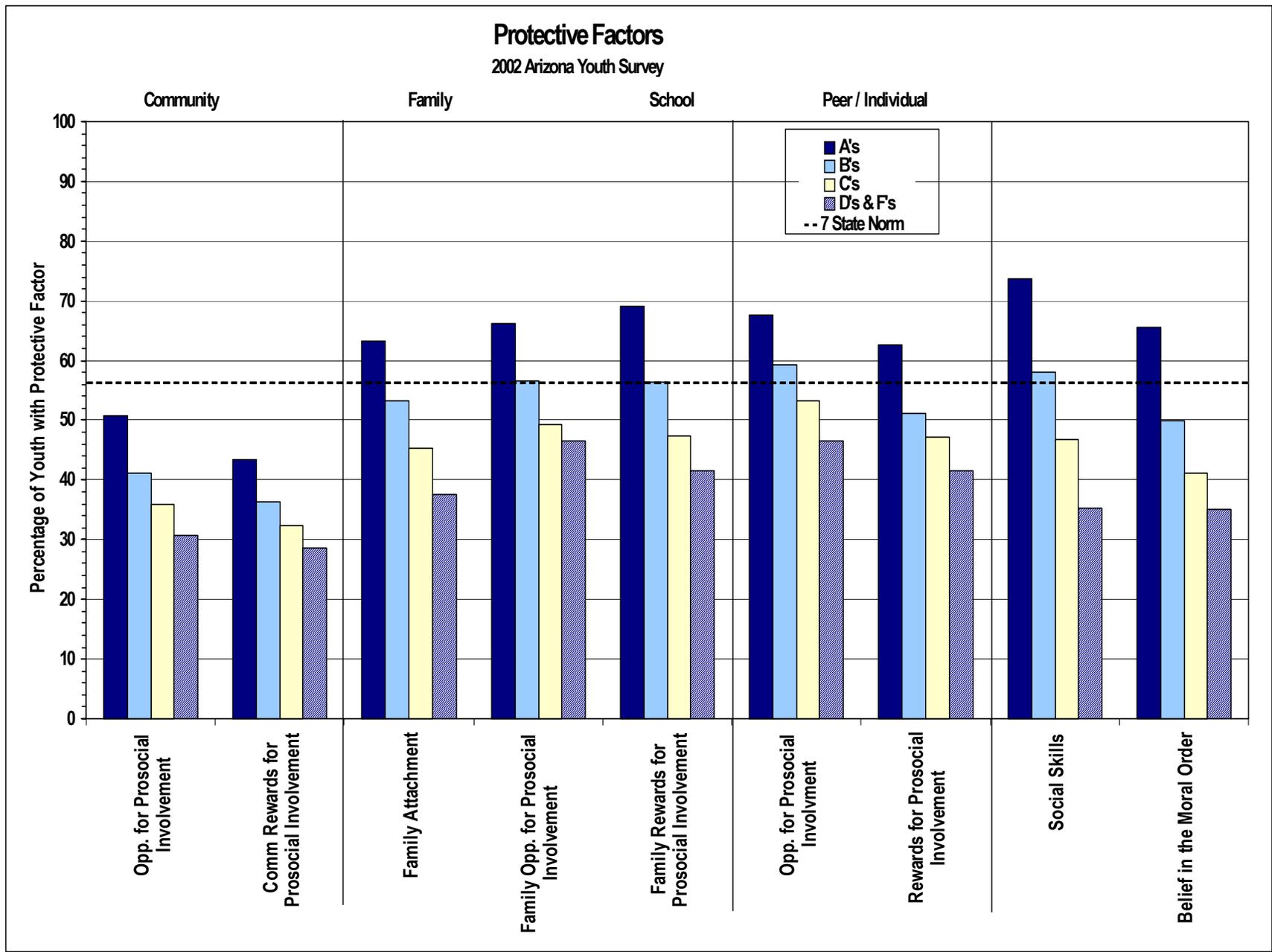


Figure 3



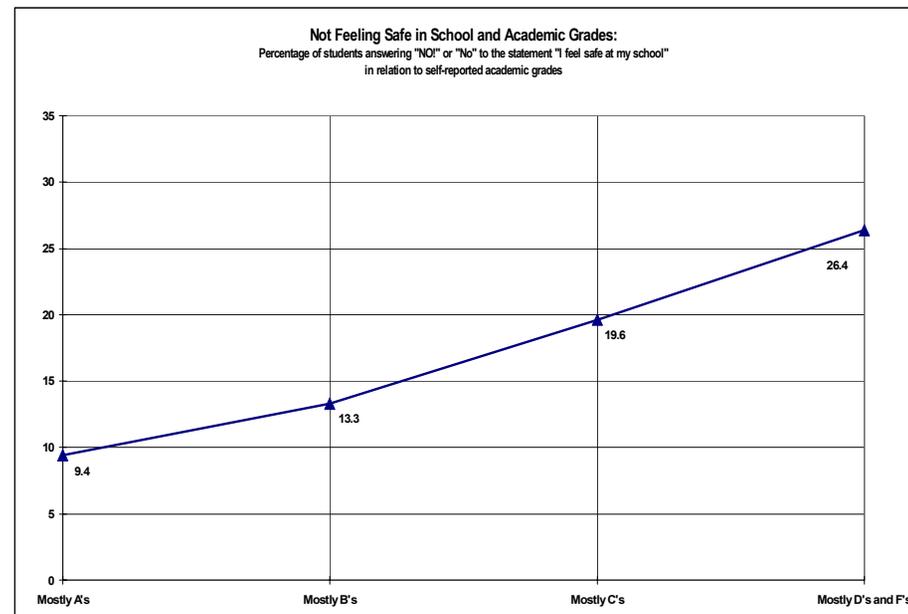
## School Safety Issues

The relationship between feeling safe at school and student grades is shown in Table 2 and Figure 4. It is clear that the percentage of students with lower grades who do not feel safe at school (26.4%) is much higher than students who receive higher grades (9.4%). Figure 4 shows that as student grades lower, perceptions of not feeling safe at school increase. While a majority of students felt safe going to and from school, a similar pattern holds for feeling unsafe going to and from school. Students who are worried about being safe at school are not as engaged in the learning experience and are not as likely to look forward to attending school and participating in the activities that are available in the school setting.

Table 2: Percentage of Students Reporting School Safety Issues by Academic Grades

	Student Grades			
	A	B	C	D & F
<b>I feel safe at my school</b>				
<b>YES! Yes</b>	90.6	86.7	80.4	73.6
<b>NO! no</b>	9.4	13.3	19.6	26.4
<b>During the past 30 days on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school.</b>				
<b>0 (no days)</b>	98.3	97.1	95.0	92.0
<b>1 or more days</b>	1.7	2.9	5.0	7.9

Figure 4



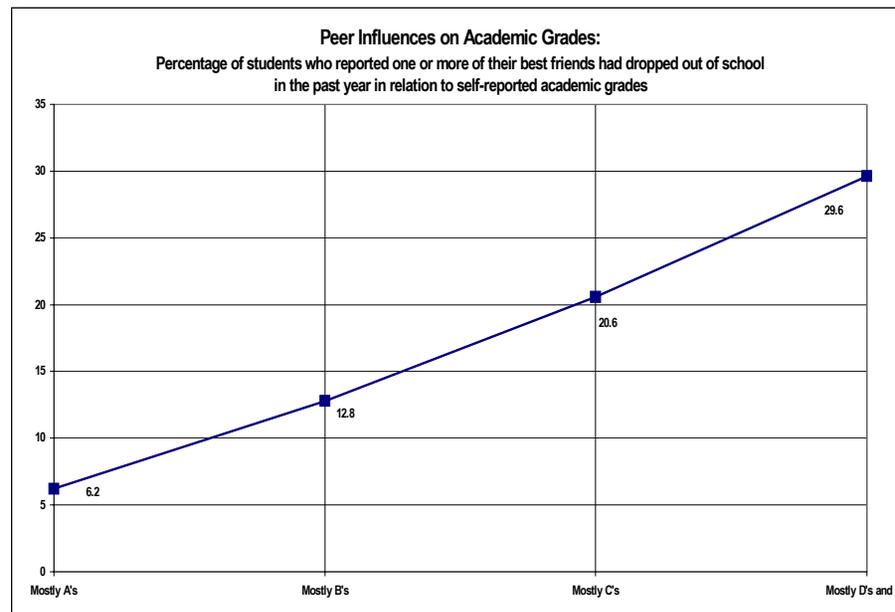
### School Attendance Issues

Table 3 shows the relationship between being suspended from school, attitudes toward skipping school, and academic grades. It is clear that students who receive “A” grades are less likely to be suspended from school and also less likely to believe that it is “not wrong at all” to stay away from school. One of the clear barriers to learning is not attending school, dropping out, or engaging in behavior that results in being suspended from school. A review of having a best friend who has dropped out of school (illustrated in Figure 5) shows that “D” and “F” students are approximately five times more likely to have one or more best friends who have dropped out of school than “A” students (6.2% compared to 29.6%).

Table 3: Percentage of Students Reporting School Attendance Issues by Academic Grades

	Student Grades			
	A	B	C	D & F
<b>How many times in the past year have you been suspended from school</b>				
None	89.7	83.2	74.6	67.8
1 or 2 times	8.4	12.5	17.4	19.7
3 or more times	1.9	4.3	8.0	12.5
<b>How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to stay away from school all day when their parents think they are at school?</b>				
Wrong	94.5	90.4	87.5	81.0
Not wrong at all	5.5	9.6	12.5	19.0
<b>Number of best friends who dropped out of school in the past year</b>				
None	93.8	87.2	79.4	70.4
One or more	6.2	12.8	20.6	29.6

Figure 5



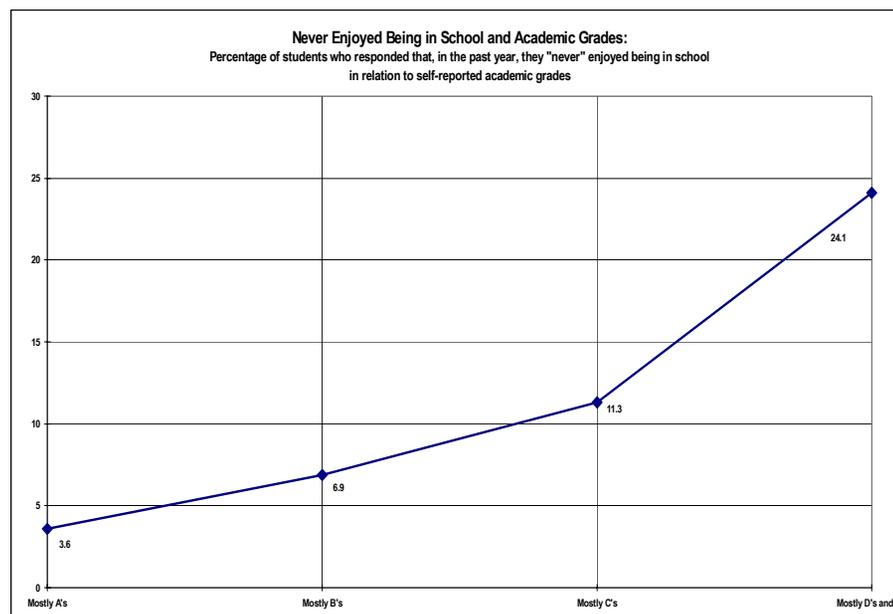
## School Enjoyment and Perception of Importance

If a student enjoys school and believes that the work that they are doing in school is important, they are much more likely to benefit from the learning process. The results in Table 4 show that if students view school work as meaningful and important, they are much more likely to receive “A” grades. For example, 15.2% of “D” and “F” students report that school work is “Never” important, compared to only 4.4% of “A” students. Table 4 also presents the percentage of students who enjoy being in school. One-half of the “A” students report that they “Often or Almost Always” enjoy being in school while approximately one-fifth of “D” and “F” students report that they “Often or Almost Always” enjoy being in school. Figure 6 illustrates that students with lower academic grades report high rates of “Never” enjoying school, in comparison to students with better grades.

Table 4: Percentage of Students Reporting School Enjoyable and Important by Academic Grades

	Student Grades			
	A	B	C	D & F
<b>How often do you feel that the school work you are assigned is meaningful and important?</b>				
Never	4.4	7.4	10.7	15.2
Seldom or Sometimes	57.1	62.7	62.5	60.4
Often or Almost Always	38.5	29.9	26.8	24.4
<b>In the past year how often did you enjoy being in school</b>				
Never	3.6	6.9	11.3	24.1
Seldom or Sometimes	46.4	54.8	57.6	57.0
Often or Almost Always	50.0	38.3	31.1	18.9

Figure 6



## Student Transitions and Mobility

Table 5 shows the relationship between the grades of students who change schools and students who do not. The percentage of students who receive “A” grades report changing schools in the past year at a rate that is about one-third that of students who receive “D” and “F” grades (10.9% compared to 31.3%). The same relationship can be seen for changing schools since kindergarten. There is a smaller percentage of “A” students who changed schools more than three times since kindergarten than “D” and “F” students.

Changing homes often results in changing schools, and the percentage of “D” and “F” students who report changing homes in the past year is approximately twice that of “A” students (32.5% compared to 15.6%).

While schools can not control whether students move or change schools, they can adopt policies that reduce the impact of these transitions. Implementing the Big Brothers/ Big Sisters program, other peer mentoring programs, and programs that allow students to identify with a smaller number of students or units within large schools have been shown to reduce the impact of transitions and increase bonding to school.

Table 5: Percentage of Students Reporting Moving by Academic Grades

	Student Grades			
	A	B	C	D & F
<b>Have you changed schools in the past year?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	10.9	15.6	19.6	31.3
<b>No</b>	89.1	84.4	80.4	68.7
<b>How many times have you changed schools since kindergarten?</b>				
<b>Never, 1 or 2 times</b>	60.9	53.4	51.1	45.5
<b>Three or more times</b>	39.1	46.6	48.9	54.8
<b>Have you changed homes in the past year?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	15.6	21.5	26.0	32.5
<b>No</b>	84.4	78.5	74.0	67.5

## Findings

Students who reported getting mostly “D’s” or “F’s” reported higher levels of drug use and antisocial behavior than students who receive higher grades. The Arizona Youth Survey showed that students who did poorly academically exhibited more risk factors and less protective factors than students who did well in school. Students who performed poorly academically were far less likely to report a high level of family attachment, opportunities for pro-social involvement or rewards for pro-social involvement than did students who receive higher grades. These students also were more likely to use tobacco products or marijuana, be suspended from school or be drunk or high at school than were students who earned higher grades.

Students who do poorly in school reported not feeling safe at their schools, or reported missing school because of fear for their safety at school or on the way to school far more frequently than did students who were succeeding academically. The students who reported that they were “D” or “F” students ditched school far more frequently than did students who earned “A’s” and “B’s”. These students were almost five times more likely to have friends who had dropped out of school than those who were “A” students. This shows a need to target students who are doing poorly in school, or who are at-risk of doing poorly in school to that allow limited resources to be utilized effectively. Applying best practices that have been proven to be effective in target populations can allow the most at-risk students to be given the prevention resources they need to succeed.

The importance and relevancy of education was not recognized as readily by students who performed poorly as those who did well. Over three times as many students who earn “D” and “F” felt that the schoolwork they are assigned is never meaningful and important as students who earn “A”. Far more pronounced is the percentage of students who reported they never enjoy being in school. Among “A” students, this percentage was 3.6 percent, however with “D” and “F” students the percentage was 24.1 percent.

Survey results show that Arizona has a population of youth that have changed homes and schools many times in their academic life. These upheavals can lower a student’s ability to succeed, particularly if the moves take place during the school year and show a need for schools to target these students with low academic stability. While schools have no control over how often students change homes or schools, they can target students who move frequently with programs that offer stability and assist with transition.

In addition, survey results strongly indicate that students that have close friends that drop out of school will have increasingly more problems with academic achievement. As parents, it is important that we are involved with our children and in knowing their friends. The success or the lack of success by a close friend could be a clear message that your child needs for increased support. This support could come in the form of spending time with them, increased communication, additional structure or securing the resources necessary to address risk factors that are present.

## Summary

The 2002 Arizona Youth Survey Gender Study noted significant differences in the way male and female students in Arizona responded to questions relating to factors known to affect school performance. Across all grades, males reported higher levels academic failure than females. In addition, male respondents reported significantly lower levels of commitment to school than did female respondents. These findings provide significant challenges for Arizona in developing strategies geared toward motivating male students to increase their levels of commitment in school and decrease their likelihood for academic failure.

Due to easy access to drugs, low family attachment, high student mobility and many other factors, students in Arizona are at a high risk for academic failure. Students who do poorly in school are at a higher risk for dropping out of school. Given current budget constraints, an effective strategy would entail identifying the students most at-risk and directing limited resources towards the specific risks factors that are putting those students at-risk.

The number of risk factors operating in a young person's life has a direct effect on the probability that they will engage in the negative behaviors like dropping out of school, substance abuse, delinquency, and violence. The effects of risk factors are cumulative in that students with a large number of risk factors are more likely to engage in prob-

lem behaviors more than students with few or no risk factors. Protective factors exert a positive influence on behavior and tend to buffer against the negative influence of risk. Clearly, students with risk factors operating in their lives do not do as well academically and do not view school as positively as students with fewer risk factors.

The barriers to learning reviewed in this report include being at-risk on the 25 risk factor scales and not having protection on the 10 protective factor scales. Substance abuse, engaging in antisocial behavior, feeling unsafe at school or unsafe while going to and from school, being suspended from school, being absent from school, believing that school work is not meaningful or important, not enjoying school, and moving or changing schools have a direct correlation to poor academic performance.

It is important that both policymakers and parents recognize underlying conditions that both negatively and positively affect the ability of our kids to perform in the school environment. These underlying conditions should not only raise red flags of concern, but also provide opportunities for timely interventions and the redirection of limited resources. "To build the new Arizona of highest aspirations, we must enhance our commitment to Arizona's children and their education". (Governor Napolitano, 2003). Increased expectations and a "raising of the bar" for school success can only be accomplished by a renewed commitment and concern by both policymakers and parents.

## Appendix A: How to Read the Charts in this Report

There are three charts presented in this report: 1) a substance use and antisocial behavior chart, 2) a risk factor chart, and 3) a protective factor chart. All the charts show the results of the 2002 Arizona Youth Survey data and involved selected Arizona students in grades 8, 10, and 12.

### Substance Use and Antisocial Behavior Charts

The chart titled “ATOD Use and Antisocial Behavior” contains information about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (referred to as ATOD use throughout the report) and other problem behaviors of students in relation to students’ academic grades. The bars on the chart represent the percentage of selected Arizona students in the 4 grade categories (students getting mostly “A’s”, students getting mostly “B’s”, students getting mostly “C’s”, and students getting mostly “D’s” or “F’s”) who reported the problem behaviors. For example, for the overall state, approximately 78 percent of students getting “C’s” reported that they ‘ever used alcohol’. This means that 78 percent of the students reporting that they received mostly “C’s” in school reported that they had tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime. The four sections in this chart represent different types of problem behaviors. The definitions of each of the types of behavior are provided below.

- **Ever-used** is a measure of the percentage of students who tried the particular substance at least once in their lifetime and is used to show the level of experimentation with a particular substance.
- **30-day use** is a measure the percentage of students who used the substance at least once in the 30 days prior to taking the survey and is a more sensitive indication of the level of current use of the substance.

- **Binge drinking** (five or more drinks in a row during the two weeks prior to the survey) and **30-day use of a pack or more of cigarettes per day** are measures of heavy use of alcohol and tobacco.
- **Antisocial behavior** is a measure of the percentage of students who report **any involvement** with the antisocial behaviors listed in the charts **in the past year**.

### Risk and Protective Factor Charts

In order to make the results of the 2002 Arizona Youth Survey more usable, risk and protective profiles were developed that show the percentage of youth at risk and the percentage of youth with protection on each scale. The risk and protective factor charts in this report also display levels of student risk and protection by student academic performance.

There are two components of the risk factor and protective factor charts that are key to understanding the information that the charts contain: 1) the cut-points for the risk and protective factor scales and 2) the dashed lines that indicate a more “national” value.

### Cut-Points

Before the percentage of youth at risk on a given scale could be calculated, a scale value or cut-point needed to be determined that would separate the at-risk group from the not at-risk group. The Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) survey (which the Arizona Youth Survey is modeled after) was designed to assess adolescent substance use, antisocial behavior, and the risk and protective factors that predict these adolescent problem behaviors. Since PNA surveys had been given to over 200,000 youth nationwide, it was possible to select two groups of

youth, one that was more at risk for problem behaviors and another group that was less at risk. A cut-point score was then determined for each risk and protective factor scale that best divided the youth from the two groups into their appropriate group, more at-risk or less at-risk. The criteria for separating youth into the more at-risk and the less at-risk groups included academic grades (the more at-risk group received “D” and “F” grades, the less at-risk group received “A” and “B” grades), ATOD use (the more at-risk group had more regular use, the less at-risk group had no drug use and use of alcohol or tobacco on only a few occasions), and antisocial behavior (the more at-risk group had two or more serious delinquent acts in the past year, the less at-risk group had no serious delinquent acts).

The cut-points that were determined by analyzing the results of the more at-risk and less at-risk groups will remain constant and will be used to produce the profiles for future surveys.

Since the cut-points for each scale will remain fixed, the percentage of youth above the cut-point on a scale (at-risk) will provide a method for evaluating the progress of prevention programs over time. For example, if the percentage of youth at risk for family conflict in a community prior to implementing a community-wide family/parenting program was 60% and then decreased to 45% one year after the program was implemented, the program would be viewed as helping to reduce family conflict.

### Dashed Line

Levels of risk and protection in your community also can be compared to a more national sample. The dashed line on each risk and protective factor chart represents the percentage of youth at risk or with protection for the seven state sample upon which the cut-points were developed. The seven states included in the norm group were Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. All the states have a mix of urban and rural students.

## Appendix B: Risk and Protective Factor Scale Definitions

<b>Community Domain Risk Factors</b>	
<b>Community and Personal Transitions &amp; Mobility</b>	Neighborhoods with high rates of residential mobility have been shown to have higher rates of juvenile crime and drug selling, while children who experience frequent residential moves and stressful life transitions have been shown to have higher risk for school failure, delinquency, and drug use.
<b>Community Disorganization</b>	Research has shown that neighborhoods with high population density, lack of natural surveillance of public places, physical deterioration, and high rates of adult crime also have higher rates of juvenile crime and drug selling.
<b>Low Neighborhood Attachment</b>	A low level of bonding to the neighborhood is related to higher levels of juvenile crime and drug selling.
<b>Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use</b>	Research has shown that legal restrictions on alcohol and tobacco use, such as raising the legal drinking age, restricting smoking in public places, and increased taxation have been followed by decreases in consumption. Moreover, national surveys of high school seniors have shown that shifts in normative attitudes toward drug use have preceded changes in prevalence of use.
<b>Perceived Availability of Drugs and Handguns</b>	The availability of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drugs has been related to the use of these substances by adolescents. The availability of handguns is also related to a higher risk of crime and substance use by adolescents.
<b>Community Domain Protective Factors</b>	
<b>Opportunities for Positive Involvement</b>	When opportunities are available in a community for positive participation, children are less likely to engage in substance use and other problem behaviors.
<b>Rewards for Positive Involvement</b>	Rewards for positive participation in activities helps children bond to the community, thus lowering their risk for substance use.
<b>Family Domain Risk Factors</b>	
<b>Family History of Antisocial Behavior</b>	When children are raised in a family with a history of problem behaviors (e.g., violence or ATOD use), the children are more likely to engage in these behaviors.
<b>Family Conflict</b>	Children raised in families high in conflict, whether or not the child is directly involved in the conflict, appear at risk for both delinquency and drug use.
<b>Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior &amp; Drugs</b>	In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy users of alcohol, or are tolerant of children's use, children are more likely to become drug abusers during adolescence. The risk is further increased if parents involve children in their own drug (or alcohol) using behavior, for example, asking the child to light the parent's cigarette or get the parent a beer from the refrigerator.
<b>Poor Family Management</b>	Parents' use of inconsistent and/or unusually harsh or severe punishment with their children places them at higher risk for substance use and other problem behaviors. Also Parents' failure to provide clear expectations and to monitor their children's behavior makes it more likely that they will engage in drug abuse whether or not there are family drug problems

<b>Family Domain Protective Factors</b>	
<b>Family Attachment</b>	Young people who feel that they are a valued part of their family are less likely to engage in substance use and other problem behaviors.
<b>Opportunities for Positive Involvement</b>	Young people who are exposed to more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of the family are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.
<b>Rewards for Positive Involvement</b>	When parents, siblings, and other family members praise, encourage, and attend to things done well by their child, children are less likely to engage in substance use and problem behaviors.
<b>School Domain Risk Factors</b>	
<b>Academic Failure</b>	Beginning in the late elementary grades (grades 4-6) academic failure increases the risk of both drug abuse and delinquency. It appears that the experience of failure itself, for whatever reasons, increases the risk of problem behaviors.
<b>Low Commitment to School</b>	Surveys of high school seniors have shown that the use of hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, stimulants, and sedatives or nonmedically prescribed tranquilizers is significantly lower among students who expect to attend college than among those who do not. Factors such as liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as relevant are also negatively related to drug use.
<b>School Domain Protective Factors</b>	
<b>Opportunities for Positive Involvement</b>	When young people are given more opportunities to participate meaningfully in important activities at school, they are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.
<b>Rewards for Positive Involvement</b>	When young people are recognized and rewarded for their contributions at school, they are less likely to be involved in substance use and other problem behaviors
<b>Peer-Individual Risk Factors</b>	
<b>Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior and Drug Use</b>	Early onset of drug use predicts misuse of drugs. The earlier the onset of any drug use, the greater the involvement in other drug use and the greater frequency of use. Onset of drug use prior to the age of 15 is a consistent predictor of drug abuse, and a later age of onset of drug use has been shown to predict lower drug involvement and a greater probability of discontinuation of use.
<b>Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior and Drug Use</b>	During the elementary school years, most children express anti-drug, anti-crime, and pro-social attitudes and have difficulty imagining why people use drugs or engage in antisocial behaviors. However, in middle school, as more youth are exposed to others who use drugs and engage in antisocial behavior, their attitudes often shift toward greater acceptance of these behaviors. Youth who express positive attitudes toward drug use and antisocial behavior are more likely to engage in a variety of problem behaviors, including drug use.

<b><i>Friends' Use of Drugs</i></b>	Young people who associate with peers who engage in alcohol or substance abuse are much more likely to engage in the same behavior. Peer drug use has consistently been found to be among the strongest predictors of substance use among youth. Even when young people come from well-managed families and do not experience other risk factors, spending time with friends who use drugs greatly increases the risk of that problem developing.
<b><i>Interaction with Antisocial Peers</i></b>	Young people who associate with peers who engage in problem behaviors are at higher risk for engaging in antisocial behavior themselves.
<b><i>Perceived Risk of Drug Use</i></b>	Young people who do not perceive drug use to be risky are far more likely to engage in drug use.
<b><i>Rewards for Antisocial Behavior</i></b>	Young people who receive rewards for their antisocial behavior are at higher risk for engaging further in antisocial behavior and substance use.
<b><i>Rebelliousness</i></b>	Young people who do not feel part of society, are not bound by rules, don't believe in trying to be successful or responsible, or who take an active rebellious stance toward society, are at higher risk of abusing drugs. In addition, high tolerance for deviance, a strong need for independence, and normlessness have all been linked with drug use.
<b><i>Sensation Seeking</i></b>	Young people who seek out opportunities for dangerous, risky behavior in general are at higher risk for participating in drug use and other problem behaviors.
<b><i>Intention to Use ATODs</i></b>	Many prevention programs focus on reducing the intention of participants to use ATODs later in life. Reduction of intention to use ATODs often follows successful prevention interventions.
<b><i>Depressive Symptoms</i></b>	Young people who are depressed are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and are more likely to use drugs. Survey research and other studies have shown a link between depression and other youth problem behaviors.
<b><i>Gang Involvement</i></b>	Youth who belong to gangs are more at risk for antisocial behavior and drug use.
<b><i>Peer-Individual Protective Factors</i></b>	
<b><i>Religiosity</i></b>	Young people who regularly attend religious services are less likely to engage in problem behaviors.
<b><i>Social Skills</i></b>	Young people who are socially competent and engage in positive interpersonal relations with their peers are less likely to use drugs and engage in other problem behaviors.
<b><i>Belief in the Moral Order</i></b>	Young people who have a belief in what is "right" or "wrong" are less likely to use drugs.