

New Jersey Middle School Principals Report on Drug Abuse and Prevention

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New Jersey Middle School Principals Report on Drug Abuse and Prevention

Prepared for: Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey
New Jersey Center for Prevention Research (NJCPR)

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Introduction & Methodology



Introduction & Methodology

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- Roper Public Affairs & Media was commissioned by The Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey to conduct a mail survey of principals of New Jersey schools that contain 7th and 8th grades.
- The sample consisted of all public and private schools containing at least 7th and 8th grades in the state of New Jersey.
- 203 questionnaires were completed from October 30 – December 18, 2006.
- Data were weighted to the proper proportions of public and private schools within northern, central, and southern New Jersey.
- Margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 7 percentage points for the total sample.



Sample Profile

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Type of School:

Public	60%
Private	12%
Parochial	28%
Charter	1%

Number of Students:

Under 100	8%
100 - 299	30%
300 - 499	26%
500 - 699	19%
700 - 999	11%
1000 or more	6%

Location:

Urban	28%
Suburban	60%
Rural	12%

Region:

North	51%
Central	26%
South	23%

Abbot School District:

Yes	17%
No	81%

Gender of Principal:

Male	40%
Female	60%

Years as Principal:

Under 5	42%
5-9	22%
10-14	12%
15 or more	23%



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Key Findings



Prevalence, Use, and Attitudes



Principals Believe Drugs and Alcohol are Serious Problems in New Jersey

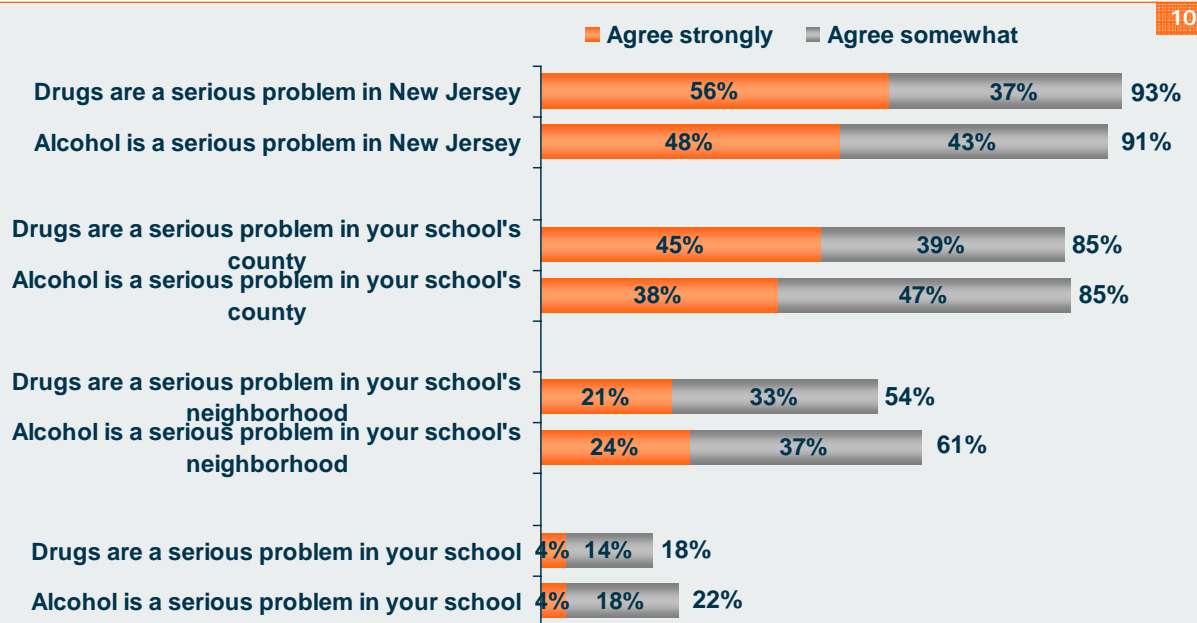
9

- Nine in 10 principals believe drugs and alcohol are serious problems in New Jersey (93% and 91%, respectively).
 - More than half (56%) **strongly agree** that drugs are a serious problem in New Jersey. Slightly fewer (48%) **strongly agree** that alcohol is a serious problem in New Jersey.



Nine in 10 Principals Say Drugs and Alcohol Are Serious Problems in New Jersey; Two in 10 Say it Is a Problem in Their School

Among all principals



Q1 "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements."

Substance Abuse Coordinators/Student Assistance Counselors in New Jersey Middle Schools

- The majority (60%) of principals in New Jersey public schools report having a substance abuse coordinator or student assistance counselor (SAC), while only 16% of principals in private schools report having a SAC.

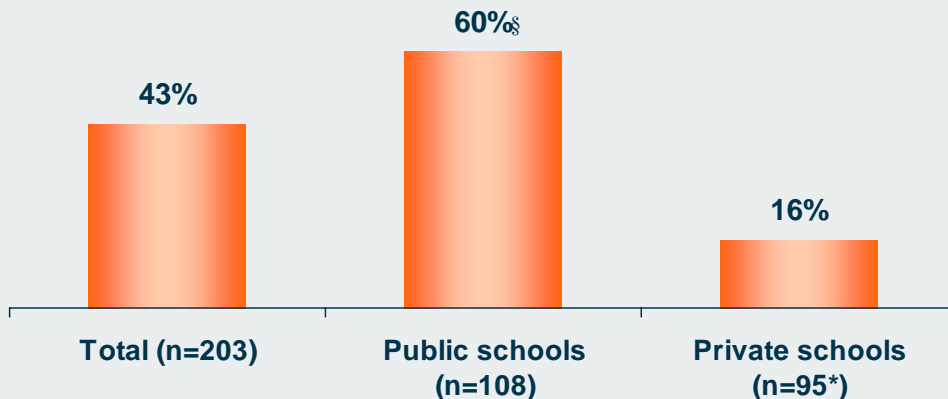
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Principals in Public Schools Are Far More Likely than Those In Private Schools to Have a Substance Abuse Coordinator or Student Assistance Counselor

Among all principals

12



* Caution: Small base (n<100)

§ Significant difference at the 95% confidence level



Q11 "Does your school have a SAC – Student Assistance Counselor or Substance Abuse Coordinator?"



Principals in Schools with a Substance Abuse Coordinator or Student Assistance Counselor Are More Likely Than Principals in Schools without a SAC to Recognize Drugs and Alcohol Are Problems in Their Schools

13

It appears that principals who are more knowledgeable about substance abuse prevention are more likely to recognize that drugs and alcohol are problems among their students.

- Principals schools with a Substance Abuse Coordinator or Student Assistance Counselor (SAC) are about four times more likely than principals in schools without a SAC to say drugs (32% vs. 8%, respectively) and alcohol (37% vs. 10%, respectively) are a serious problem in their schools.
- Principals who serve on substance abuse prevention committees are more than twice as likely as principals who do not to say drugs are a serious problem in their schools (32% vs. 14%).

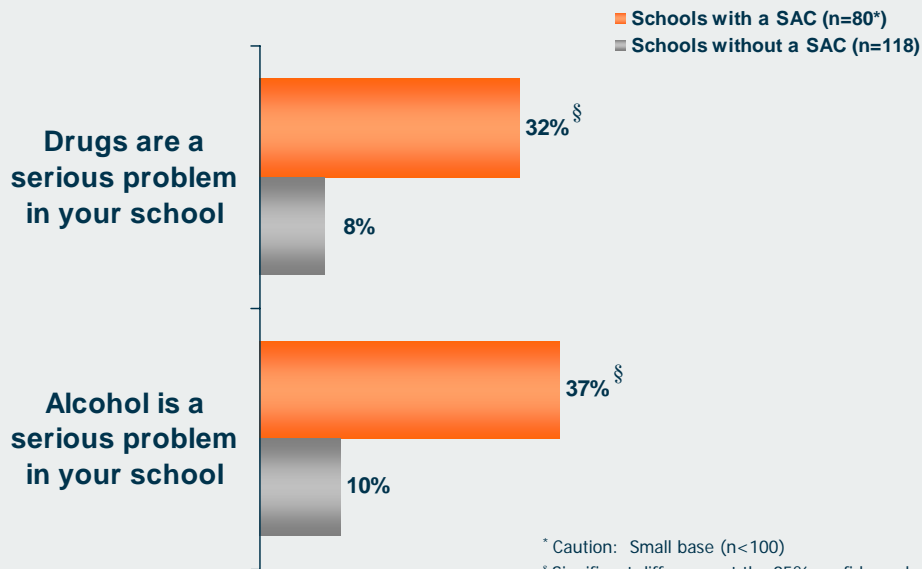


Principals in Schools with a SAC Are Four Times More Likely Than Principals in Schools without a SAC to Believe Drugs and Alcohol Are Serious Problems in Their Schools

Among all principals

% Saying "Agree strongly/somewhat"

14



* Caution: Small base (n<100)

§ Significant difference at the 95% confidence level



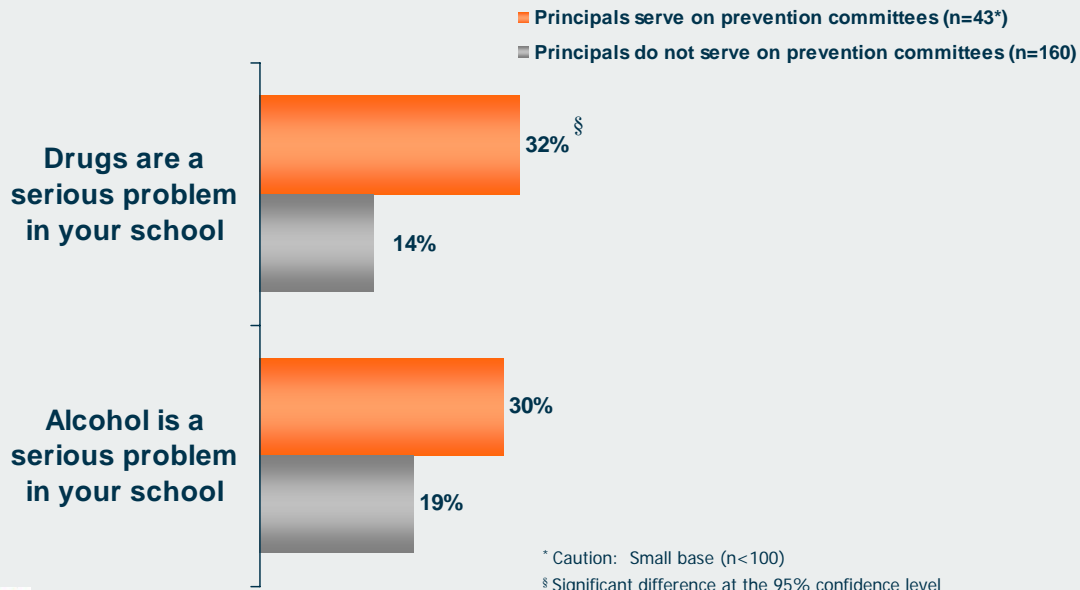
Q1 "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements."

One-Third of Principals Who Serve on Substance Abuse Prevention Boards or Committees Outside the School Believe Drugs Are a Serious Problem in Their Schools

Among all principals

15

% Saying "Agree strongly/somewhat"



Q1 "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements."

Overall Half of Principals Believe Alcohol and Marijuana Are Most Prevalent Among Their Students

16

- Nearly half of principals overall believe alcohol (47%) and marijuana (45%) are among the top three most prevalent substances among their students.
 - Prescription drugs and inhalants are perceived as the next most prevalent substances (14% each).
- Principals who serve on substance abuse prevention committees or boards are particularly likely to view alcohol (64%) and marijuana (58%) as prevalent among their students.

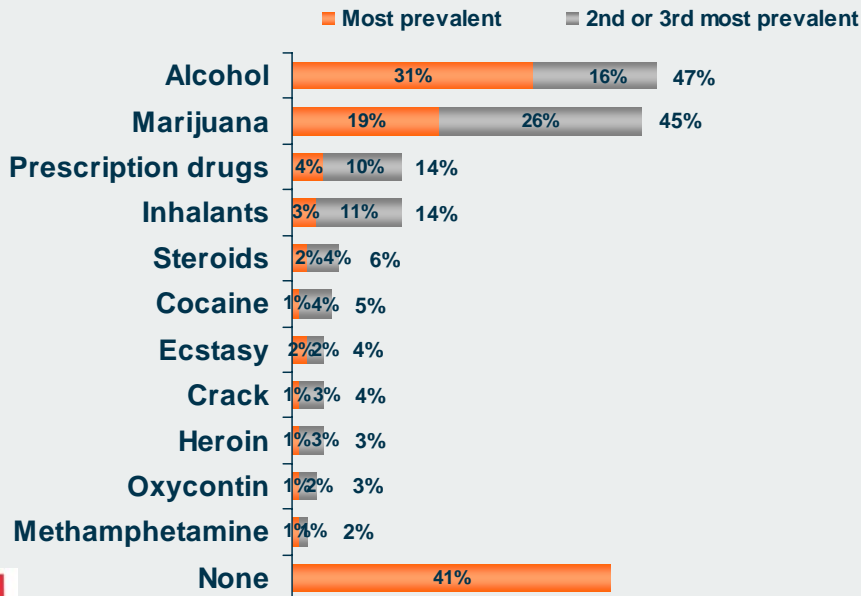


Overall, Principals Believe Alcohol and Marijuana Are By Far the Most Prevalent Substances Used Among Their Middle School Students

Among all principals

17

% saying the following drugs are one of the top 3 most prevalent among their students



Q2 "Which 3 substances would you say are most prevalent among students at your school?"

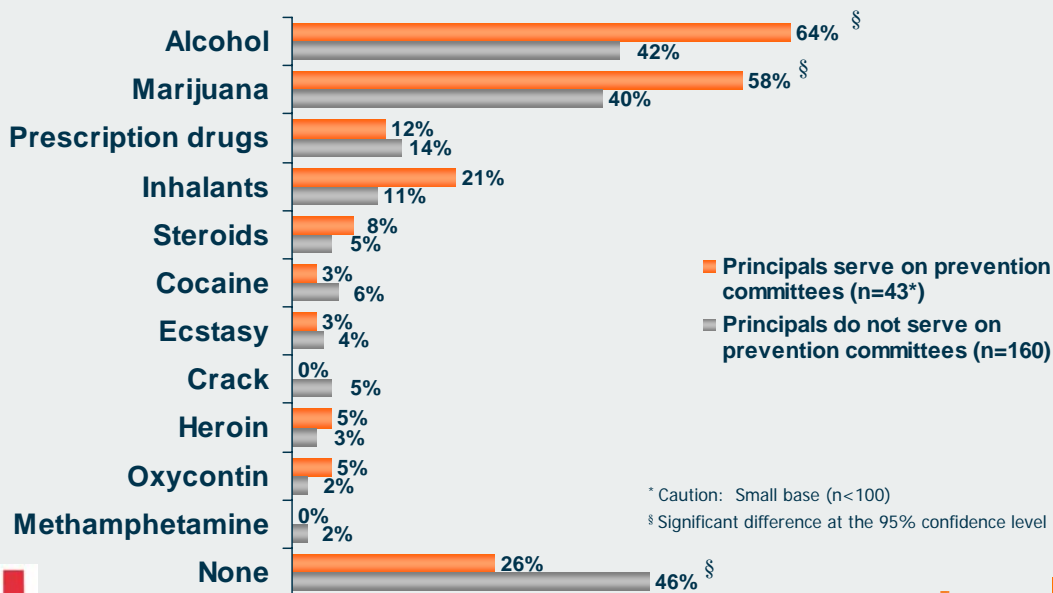


Principals Who Serve on Prevention Committees Are Particularly Likely to Believe Alcohol and Marijuana Are Prevalent Among Their Middle School Students

Among all principals

18

% saying the following drugs are one of the top 3 most prevalent among their students



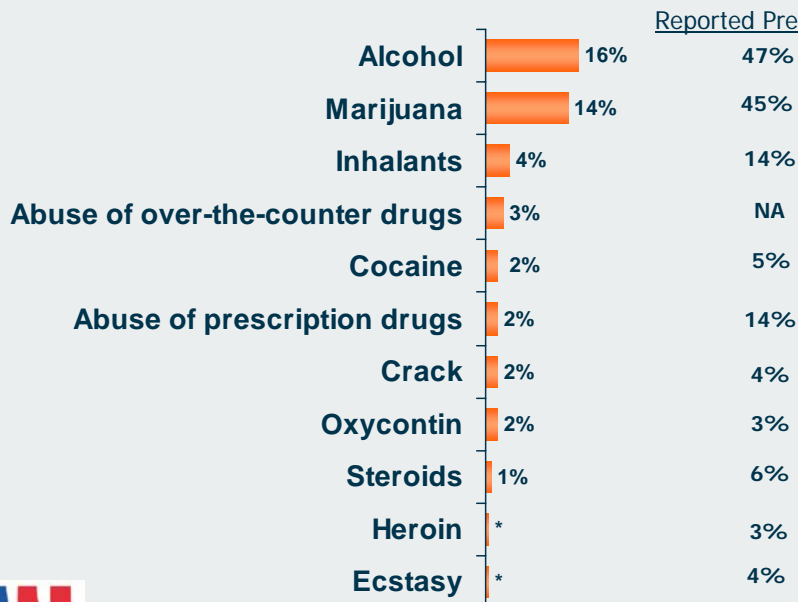
Q2 "Which 3 substances would you say are most prevalent among students at your school?"

Principals Are Four Times More Likely to Believe Alcohol and Marijuana Are Problems Among Their Middle School Students Than Other Drugs Asked About

Among all principals

% saying the following drugs are a problem among their middle school students (4,5 on a 5-point scale)

19



* Less than .5%

** One of the top 3 most prevalent among their students (Q2)



Q3 "In your school, to what degree do you perceive the following substances as being problems for your middle school students?"

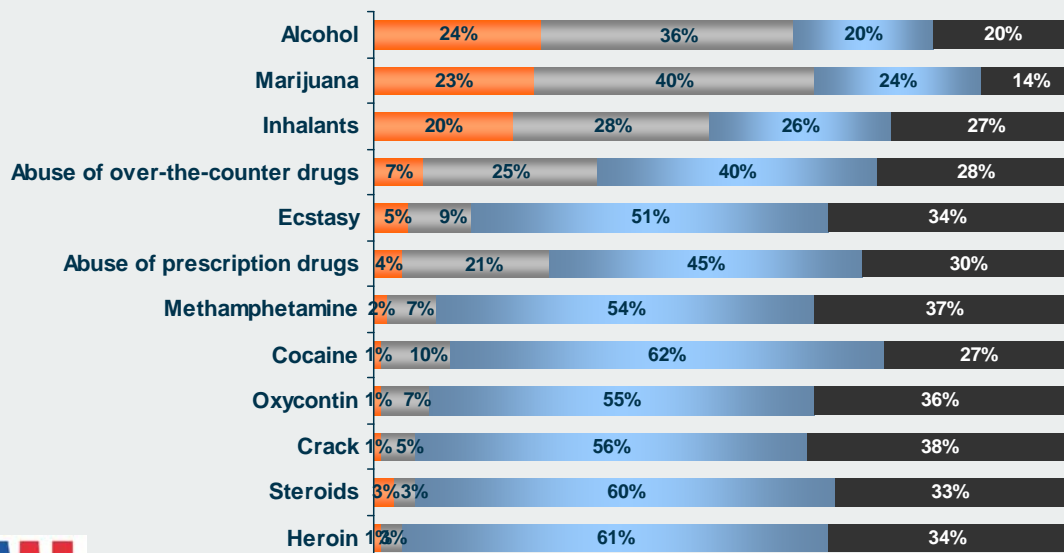
The Majority of Principals Believe Students Start Using Alcohol and Marijuana Before Ninth Grade

Among all principals

20

% saying they believe students first start using the following substances in each grade

■ Under 7th grade ■ 7th or 8th grade ■ 9th grade or later ■ No answer



Q4 "From your experiences, at what grade level do you believe students first start using the following substances?"

Principals Strongly Believe Peer Influence on Drug Decisions is Significant, While Parents Tend to Believe They Have More Impact Than Their Children's Friends

21

- Virtually all principals (98%) believe their students' friends' opinions are **very or somewhat important** when it comes to their students' decisions whether or not to use drugs. The vast majority (84%) believe their students' friends' opinions are **very important**.
- Principals are nearly three times as likely as children's parents to believe peer influences are **very important** in children's drug decisions (84% vs. 32%*, respectively).



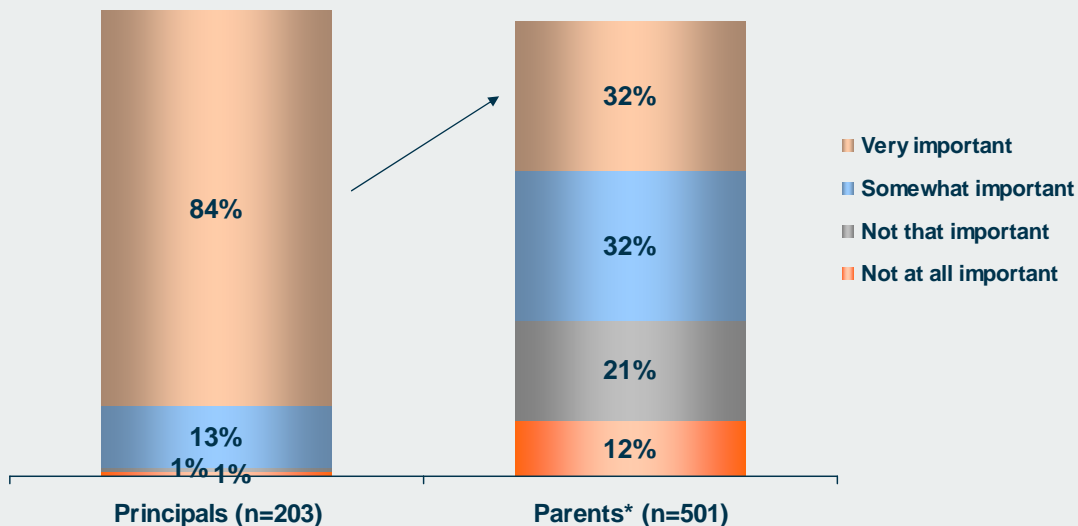
* Source: *Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey Parents Study, January 2006*



The Vast Majority of Principals Believe Students' Friends' Opinions About Drugs Are Very Important

22

% of principals and parents saying students' friends' opinions are important



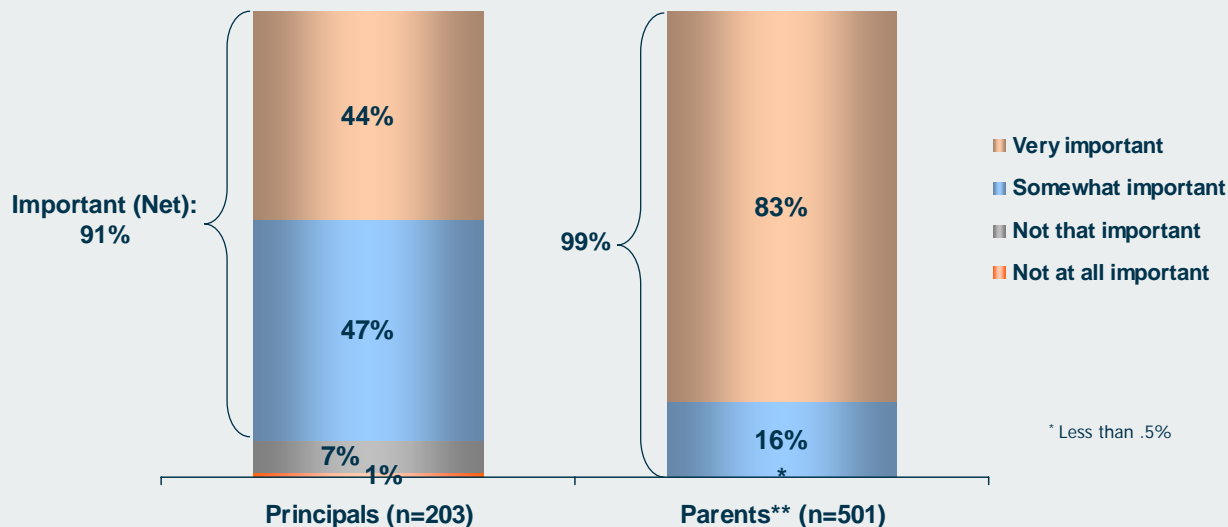
* Source: Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey Parents Study, January 2006

Q18 "How important do you feel your students' friends' opinions are when it comes to your students' decisions whether or not to use drugs?"

Principals and Parents Agree Parental Influence is Important in Children's Drug Decisions

23

% of principals and parents saying parents' opinions are important



** Source: *Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey Parents Study, January 2006*

Q19 "How important do you feel your students' parents' opinions are when it comes to your students' decisions whether or not to use drugs?"

Student's Friends and Parents May Have the Most Influence on Drug Decisions, but Principals Recognize Their Own and Their Teacher's Roles

24

- More than eight in 10 (82%) principals believe their opinions are important in their students' decisions about drugs.
 - About two in 10 (18%) believe their opinions are **very important**.
- A similar proportion (88%) believe their teachers' opinions are important – 21% believe their teachers' opinions are **very important**.

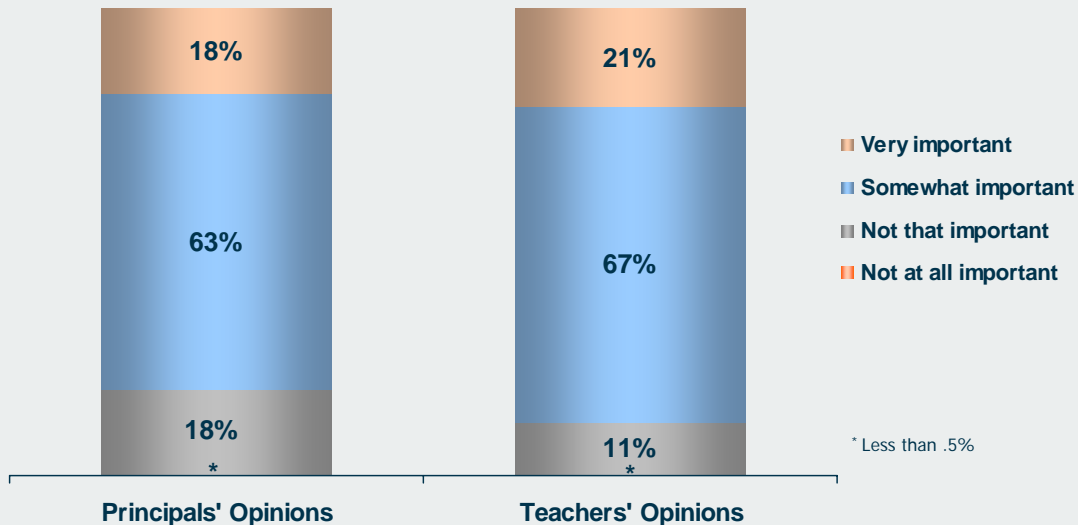


Principals Believe Their Own Opinions and Their Teachers' Opinions Play a Role in Student's Decisions About Drugs

Among all principals

25

% of principals saying principals' and teachers' opinions are important



Q20 "How important do you feel your opinions are when it comes to your students' decisions whether or not to use drugs?"

Q21 "How important do you feel your teachers' opinions are when it comes to your students' decisions whether or not to use drugs?"

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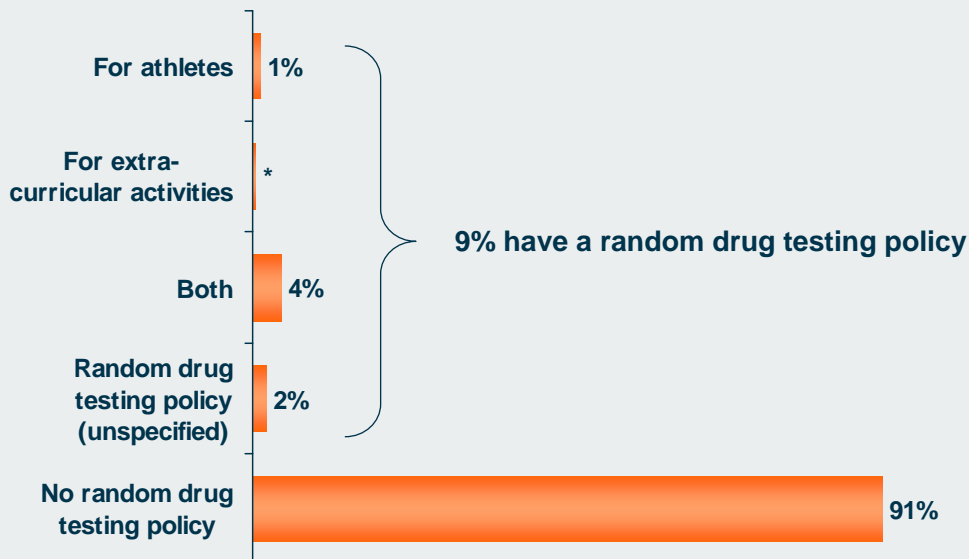


One in Ten Principals Have a Random Drug Testing Policy at Their Schools

Among all principals

26

% saying they have the following random drug testing policies



* Less than .5%



Q5 "Does your school have a random drug testing policy in place?"

Q6 "Is this program for athletes, extra-curricular activities, or both?"

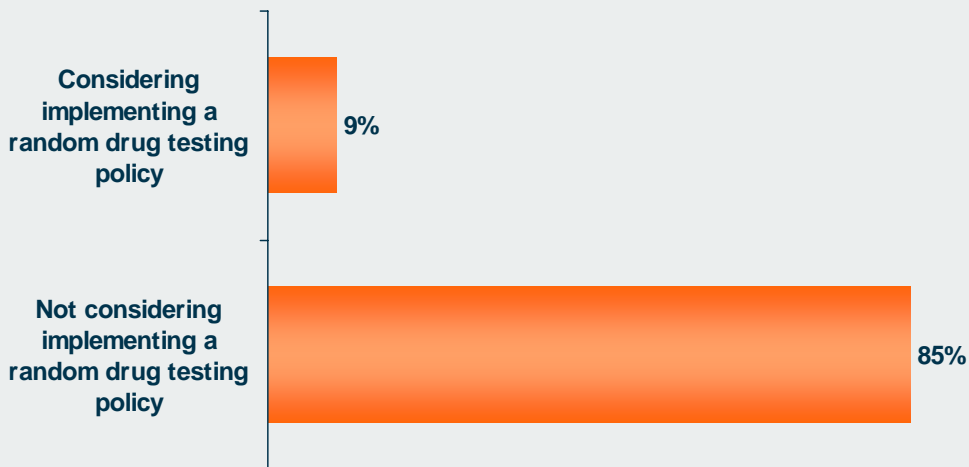
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RESEARCH & ANALYTICS

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Only One in Ten Who Do Not Have a Random Drug Testing Policy Are Considering Implementing One

Among principals whose schools do not have a random drug testing policy

27



■ Do not have a random drug testing policy in place (n=187)



Q7 "If your school does not have a random drug testing policy, are you considering implementing one?"



Prevention Messages and Measures



Anti-Drug and Alcohol Ads

29

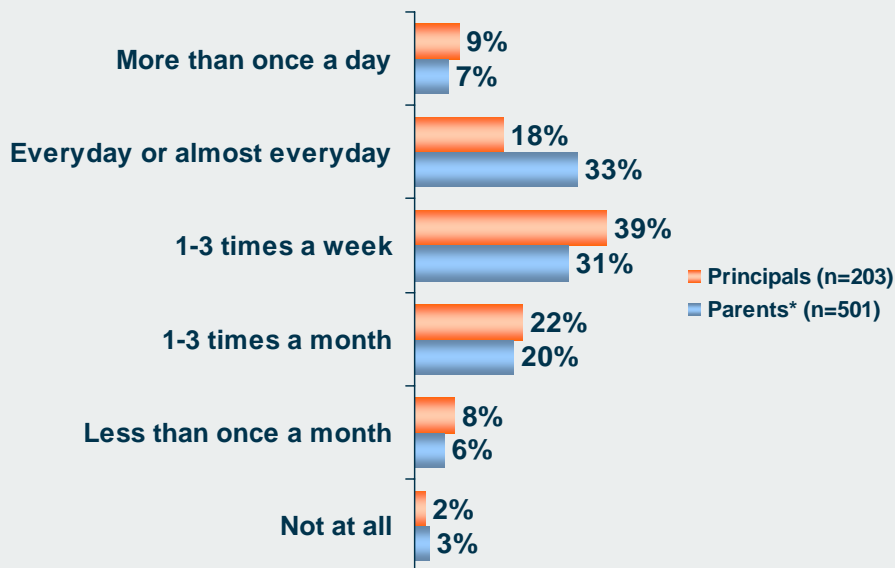
- The vast majority (66%) of principals see or hear commercials or ads about the risks of drugs or alcohol one or more times per week. This is on par with New Jersey parents (70%).
 - 88% of principals reporting seeing these ads at a minimum of once per month.



Two-thirds of New Jersey Principals Report Seeing Anti-Drug or Alcohol Ads At Least Weekly

Among all principals

30



* Source: Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey Parents Study, January 2006

Q25 "How frequently do you see or hear commercials or ads telling you about the risks of drugs or alcohol?"



Substance Abuse Prevention

31

- Nine in 10 (90%) of principals say they would be interested in participating in free programs or initiatives sponsored by the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey for their school.
 - About eight in 10 (78%) principals are currently familiar with PDFNJ.



Prevention is a Priority Among Principals

32

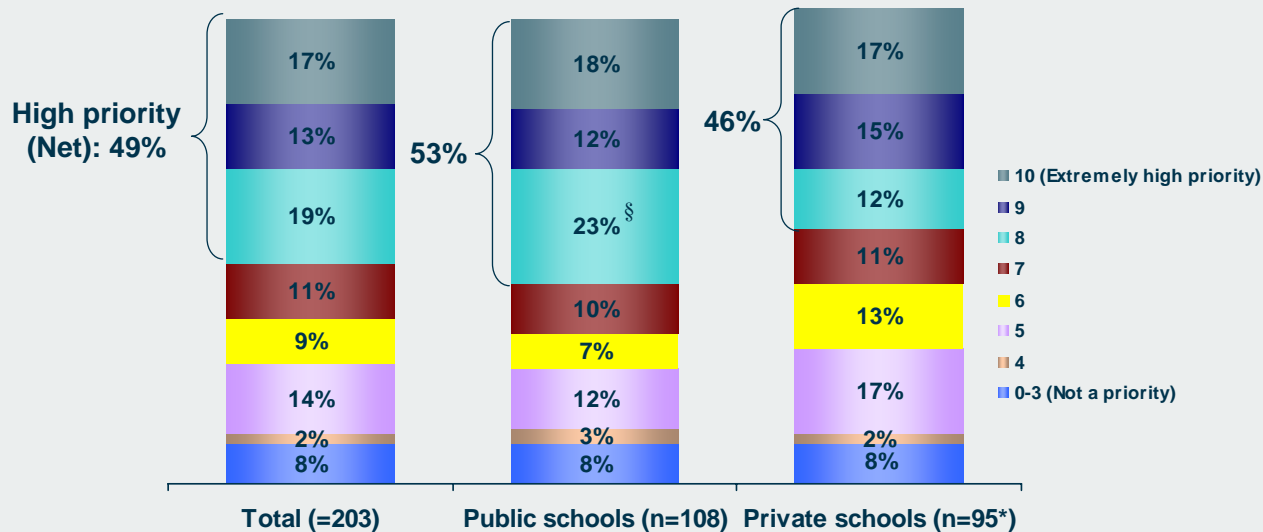
- About half (49%) of principals say substance abuse prevention programming is a high priority at their school.
 - Virtually all principals find small group discussions, presentations to classrooms, and classroom activities effective in preventing drug use.
- The majority of principals also report having various kinds of substance abuse prevention messages in their schools. Nine in 10 (92%) have posters or other messages to students.
 - Nearly seven in 10 (68%) principals believe these types of messages are effective when it comes to drug prevention.
- Principals at SAC schools report less than half the SAC's time can be devoted to substance abuse prevention.



About Half of Principals Say Substance Abuse Prevention Programming is a High Priority at Their Schools

Among all principals

33



* Caution: Small base (n<100)

§ Significant difference at the 95% confidence level

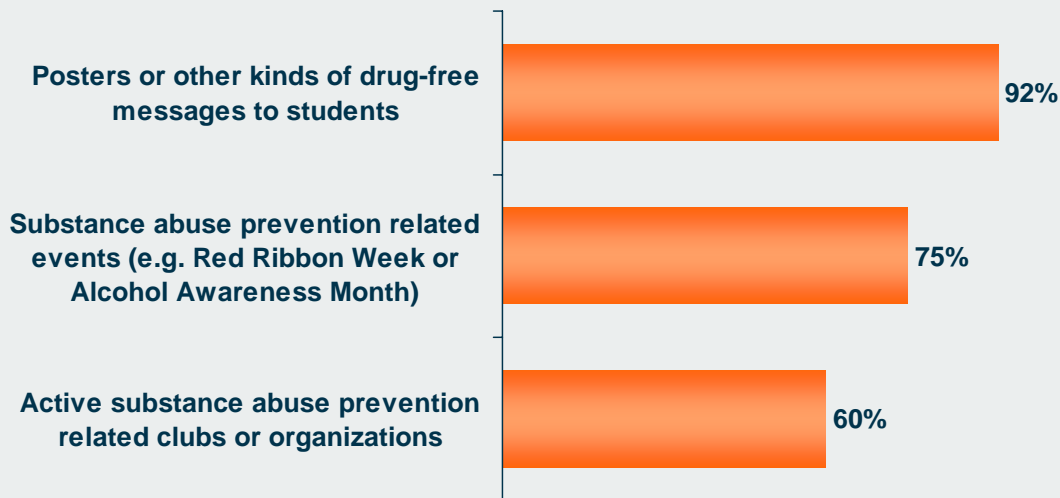
Q8 "How much of a priority is substance abuse prevention programming at your school?"



The Majority of Principals Report Having Various Substance Abuse Prevention Messages in Their Schools

Among all principals

34



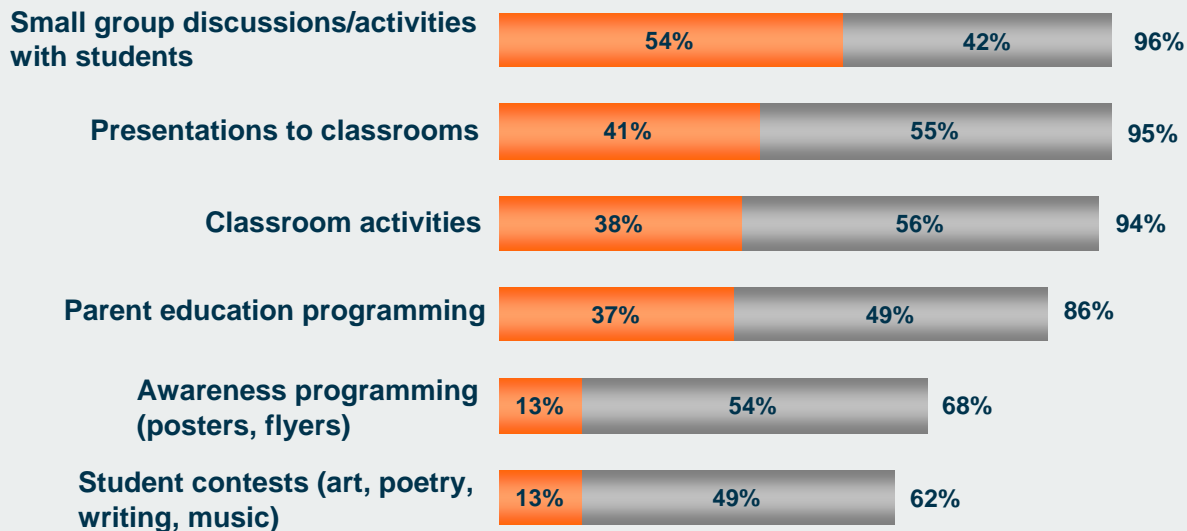
Q9 "Please indicate in the grid below if you have any of the following in your school."

Large Majorities of Principals Report Discussions, Presentations, Activities, and Parent Education Are Most Effective in Preventing Drug Use

Among all principals

35

Very effective Somewhat effective

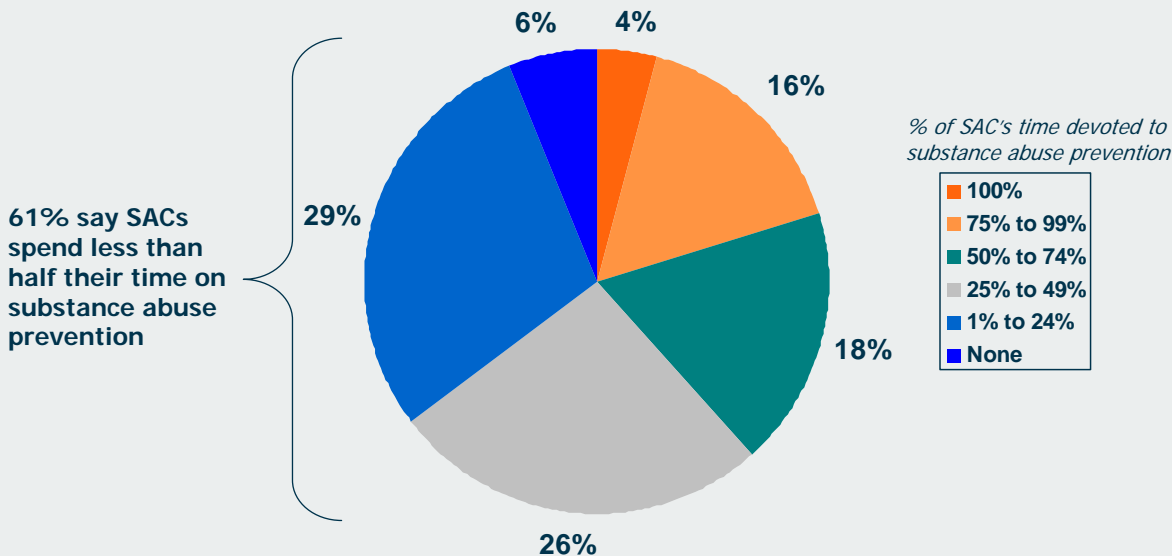


Q10 "When it comes to drug prevention, how effective would you say each of the following are?"

The Majority of Principals at Schools with a SAC Believe Less Than Half the SAC's Time is Devoted to Substance Abuse Prevention

Among principals whose school has a SAC (n=80)*

36



* Caution: Small base (n<100)



Q12 "If your school does have a SAC, what percent of his or her time would you say is devoted to substance abuse prevention?"



Substance Abuse Prevention Resources

37

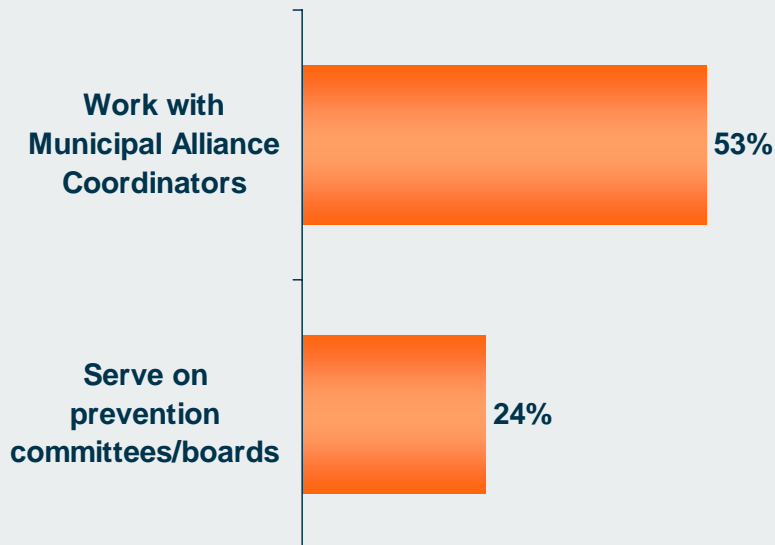
- Principals cite several different resources on the issue of substance abuse prevention.
 - Principals are most likely to say they work with Municipal Alliance Coordinators on substance abuse prevention programs (53%).
 - Nearly as many (42%) say their schools' PTAs sponsor programming.
 - About one-fourth (24%) of principals say they themselves serve on boards, committees or community organizations outside the school that focus on substance abuse prevention.



A Majority of Principals Are Working With Municipal Alliance Coordinators

Among all principals

38



Q14 "Do you currently serve on any boards, committees or community organizations outside the school which are focused on the issue of substance abuse prevention?"

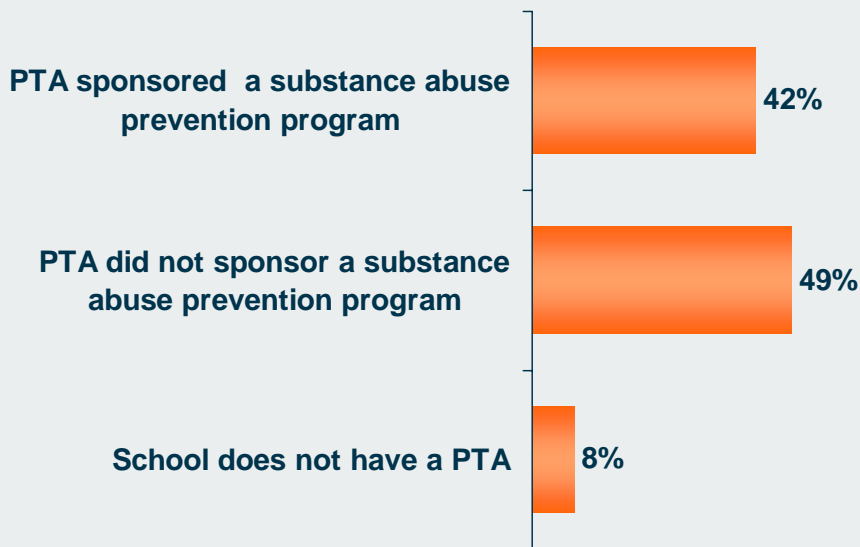
Q15 "Do you work with Municipal Alliance Coordinators (MAC's) on substance abuse prevention programs?"



Four in Ten Principals Say Their Schools' PTAs Sponsor Substance Abuse Prevention Programs

Among all principals

39



Q16 "Do you have a parent teacher association (PTA) in your school?"

Q17 "Within the last year, has the PTA sponsored a substance abuse prevention program?"



Substance Abuse Prevention Funding

40

- Three in 10 principals believe the current state of funding for substance abuse prevention in their schools is at least sufficient. However, one-third (34%) believe it is somewhat less than they would like and another third (32%) feel it is **a lot less** than they would like.

