

SURVEY TO SCHOOLS ON  
DRUG-RELATED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

*South Dakota Criminal Statistics  
Analysis Center*

*South Dakota Attorney General's  
Task Force on Drugs*

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ACQUISITIONS

Office of Attorney General  
Mark Barnett

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**INTRODUCTION:**

In South Dakota, our young people are one of our greatest assets. Citizens, schools and government officials are concerned about the social, emotional, medical and moral impact of drug usage among this treasured group. Because of these concerns and the reporting requirements of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, this survey was designed to better understand the extent of drug-related incidents among middle school, junior high and high school age students.

In May of 1992, a survey was sent by the South Dakota Attorney General's Task Force on Drugs to high schools, junior high schools and middle schools in the state. This survey addressed drug-related issues as they apply to South Dakota students. A similar survey was administered in 1989, including only high schools. The questionnaire was designed, reviewed and updated by a number of professionals who have had experience in working with or in schools, designing survey instruments, working with drug and alcohol patients, administering various drug and educational programs, and related duties, jobs or experiences.

In 1992, a total of 374 public, private, tribal and BIA schools were identified to receive the questionnaire (see page 11). Two hundred-sixty-four administrators responded to the survey. The survey, which was sent to the school principals, was accompanied by a cover letter signed by Attorney General Mark Barnett and John Bonaiuto, Secretary of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs.

**BASIC RESULTS - DEMOGRAPHICS:**

The majority (39%) of the schools responding to the survey identified themselves as being a senior high schools: grades 9-12 or 10-12. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the surveyed administrators responded for multiple schools (other schools), 18% were junior high schools: grades 7-8 or 7-9 and 15% were middle schools: grades 4-8, 5-8, or 6-8.

The number of students in the responding schools ranged from a low of 7 to a high of 1545 students. The average number of students in the schools was 230.

The vast majority (92%) of the schools were public schools, while just over 3% were private, 3% were Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools and approximately 1% were some other type of school.

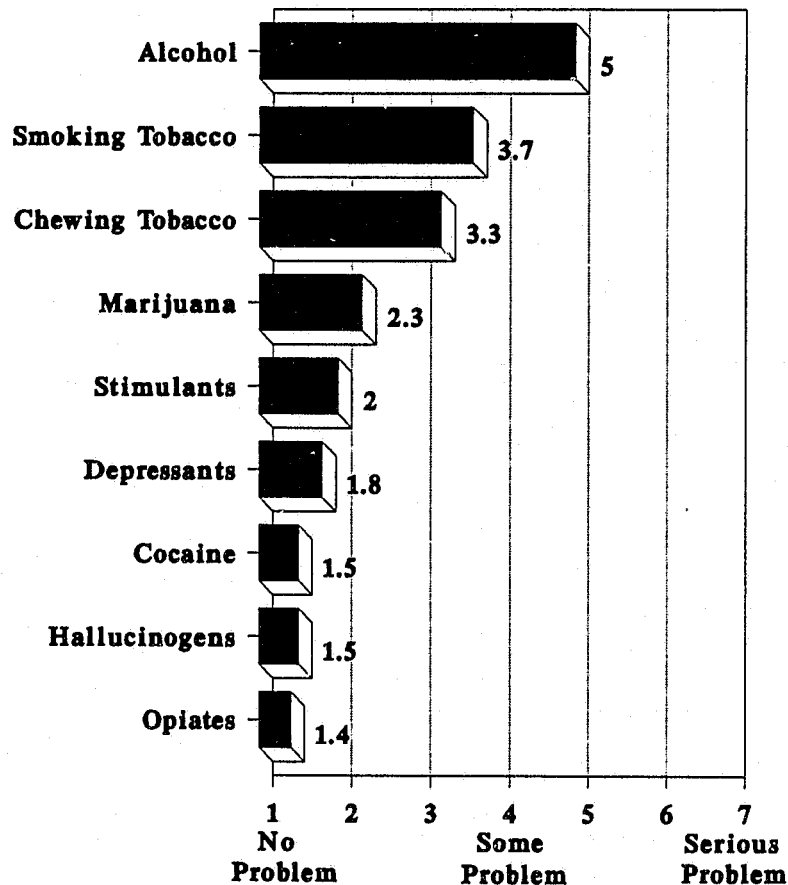
The respondents were asked to indicate the location of their school as being central South Dakota, eastern South Dakota, or western South Dakota. Nearly 53% were from the eastern part of the state, over one-fourth (28%) reported being located in central South Dakota and nearly 20% were in the western part of the state.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE RATINGS:**

School administrators were asked to rate how serious of an overall drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse problem their students had on a scale from 1-7 with a "1" indicating no problem, a "4" representing some problem and a "7" signifying a serious problem. The respondents could also circle the numbers of 2, 3, 5, or 6 on the 7-point scale, depending how closely the word(s) represented their perception of the drug-related situation.

As can be seen in Graph 1 below, alcohol was viewed by the school administrators as the most serious substance abuse problem of their students. Smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco and marijuana followed.

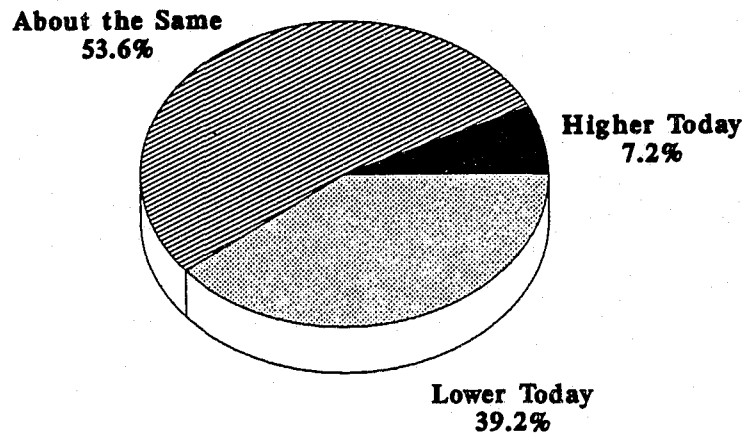
**Graph 1**  
**Substance Abuse Ratings**



**DRUG USE FREQUENCY:**

The school administrators were asked if the frequency of overall drug usage of their students was increasing, decreasing or staying about the same, as compared to three years ago. Nearly 93% of the respondents believed that drug use is about the same or lower than in 1989. The term "drugs", as used below, excludes tobacco and alcohol, which are considered later as separate abuse categories.

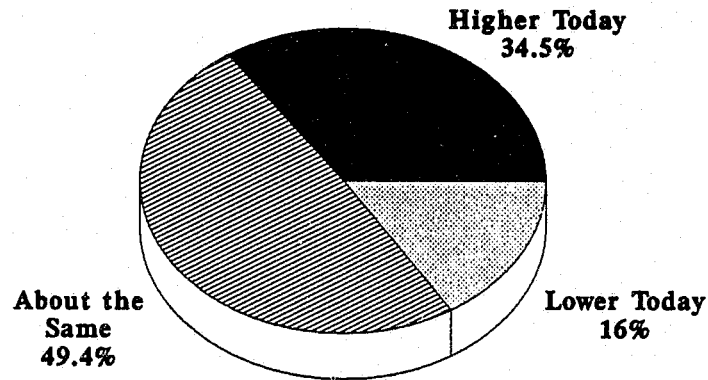
Graph 2  
**Drug Use Frequency**



**ALCOHOL USE FREQUENCY:**

The school administrators were asked if the frequency of overall alcohol consumption of students in their school was increasing, decreasing or staying about the same, as compared to three years ago. Approximately one-half of those surveyed felt that the alcohol problem among students is about the same as three years ago. Over one-third of the administrators felt that the alcohol problem is greater now than it was three years ago.

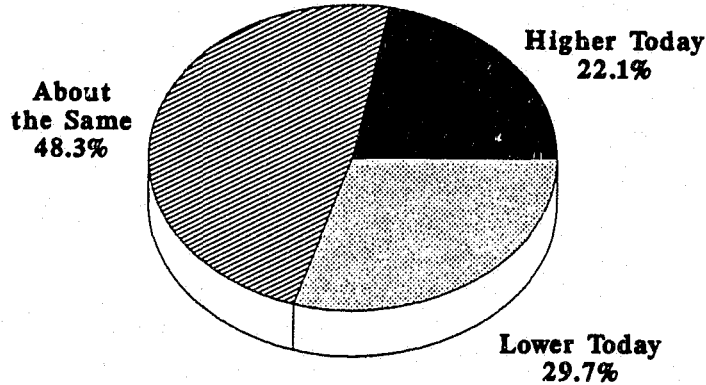
Graph 3  
**Alcohol Use Frequency**



**TOBACCO USE FREQUENCY:**

The school administrators were asked if the frequency of overall tobacco usage of students in the school was increasing, decreasing or staying about the same, as compared to three years ago. About one-half of those questioned responded that the tobacco problem has remained relatively constant over the past three years.

**Graph 4**  
**Tobacco Use Frequency**



**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS BY SCHOOL:**

Respondents were asked if any of their students had been disciplined by the school or school district authorities for any drug and/or alcohol incidents during the 1991-1992 school year. A small portion (9.5%) reported that disciplinary action had been taken for drug-related activity. Over one-half (56.1%) reported that disciplinary action had been taken for alcohol-related activities.

Just 6.4% of responding schools reported using suspension from school as a disciplinary measure for drug use. Over one-fourth (26.9%) used suspension from school as a disciplinary measure for using alcohol. "Other action" was reported for using alcohol in 32.2% of the responses. This usually resulted in suspension of athletic privileges.

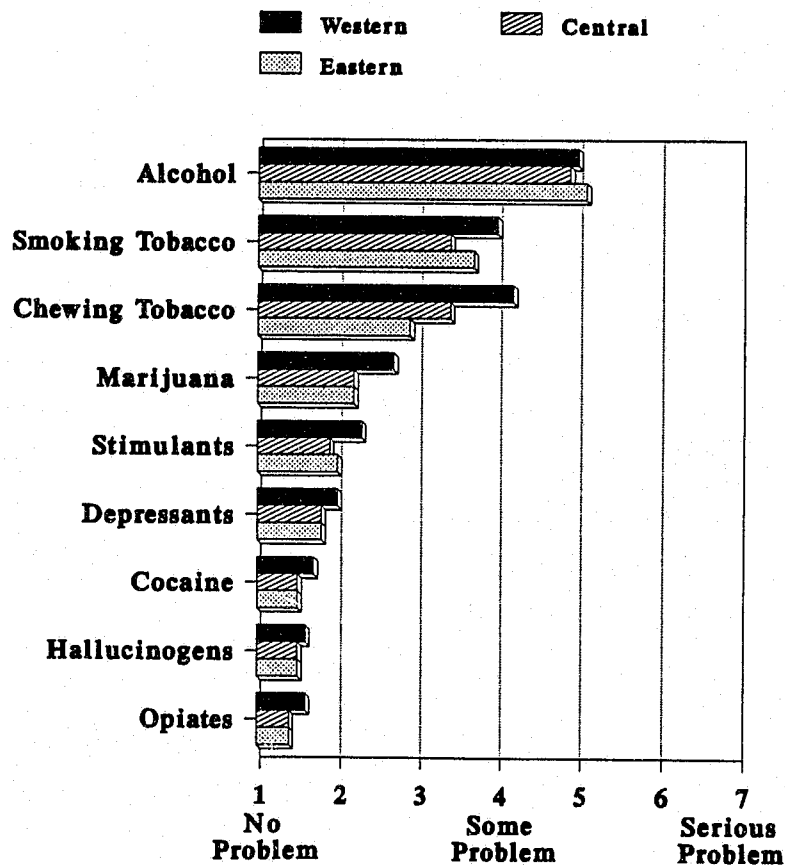
### COMPARISON BY AREA OF STATE

The school administrators were asked to indicate the area of the state in which these schools were located. Nearly 53% were from the eastern part of the state, over one-fourth (28%) reported being located in central South Dakota and nearly 20% were in the western part of the state.

There was no significant difference among the three mean ratings concerning alcohol abuse problems. Alcohol was considered to be the most significant substance abuse problem in each of the three sections of the state. In the graph below, it can be noted that problems with Smoking Tobacco and Chewing Tobacco follow alcohol concerns. In all categories except Alcohol Abuse, the schools located in western South Dakota believed substance abuse problems in their schools were serious.

Graph 5

## Substance Abuse Ratings

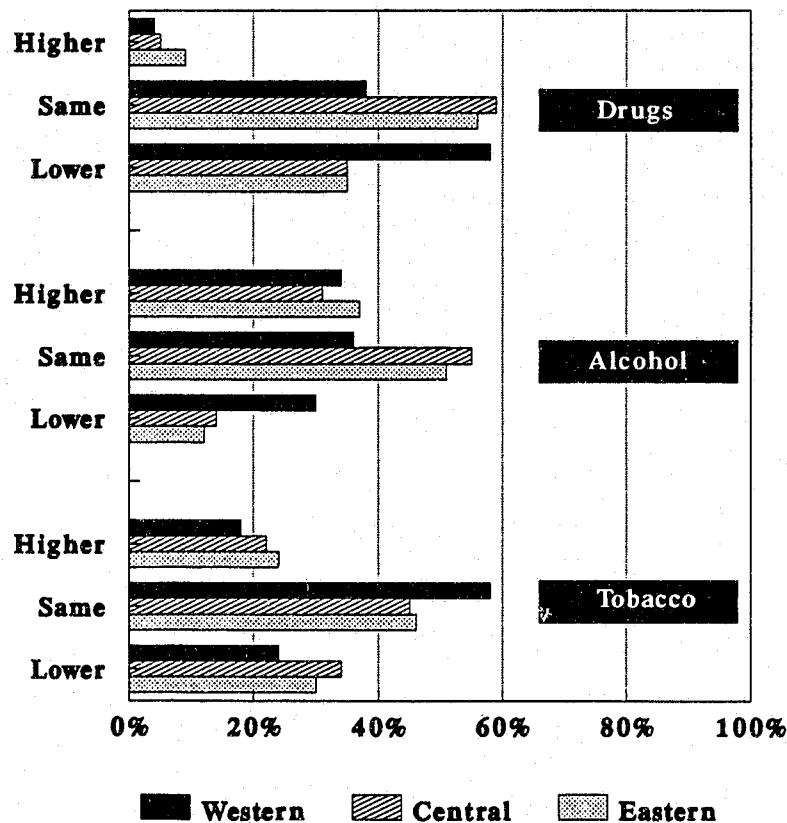


Administrators from the different areas of the state varied on their perceptions of frequency of substance abuse. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the schools located in western South Dakota reported that drug use has decreased in the past three years. Only 35% of schools in central and eastern South Dakota reported a decrease. The majority of these schools (56% and 59% respectively) felt that drug use had remained the same.

In comparing alcohol use frequency, 51% of the schools in the eastern portion of the state and 55% of the schools in central South Dakota felt that this problem has remained constant for the past three years. Only 36% of the western schools felt as such.

Administrators from all three areas of the state felt similarly about frequency of tobacco use among their students. The majority felt the tobacco problem has remained fairly constant throughout the past three years. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of western schools, 45% of central schools and 46% of eastern schools held this belief.

**Graph 6**  
**Substance Use Frequency**





Disciplinary action was taken for the use or sale of alcohol in 54% of western schools, 55% of central schools and 57% of eastern schools. Sixteen percent (16%) of western reporting schools, 4% of central schools and 10% of eastern schools took disciplinary action for the use or sale of drugs.

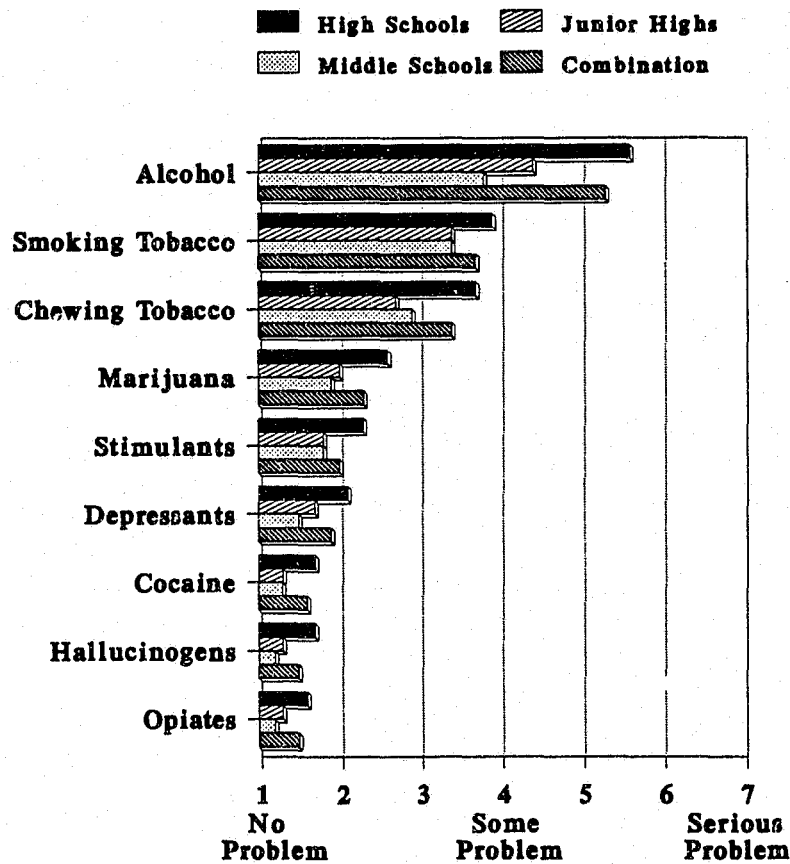
### COMPARISON BY GRADES IN SCHOOL

The survey asked which grades were included in each principal's school. The majority (39%) of the schools identified themselves as being a senior high school: grades 9-12 or 10-12. Twenty eight percent (28%) of the surveyed administrators responded for multiple schools, 18% were junior high schools: grades 7-8 or 7-9 and 15% were middle schools: grades 4-8, 5-8, or 6-8.

Overall, alcohol was considered to be the most significant substance abuse problem in each of the four types of schools. Concerns relating to smoking tobacco abuse and chewing tobacco abuse follow. High schools reported the greatest concern in all areas of abuse.

Graph 7

## Substance Abuse Ratings

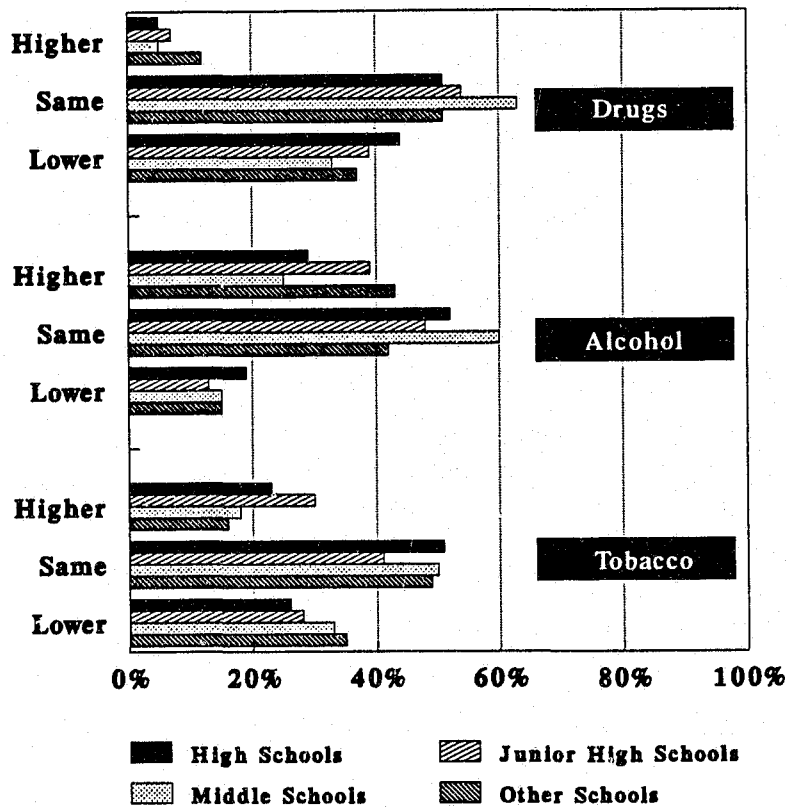


The majority of all administrators levels felt that the frequency of drug abuse had remained about the same over the past three years. The second most common response was that drug abuse had lowered and the least frequent response was that drug abuse had increased in severity.

In comparing alcohol use frequency, all grade levels reported that this problem had remained constant except for other schools. They felt that alcohol use had increased in the last three years.

The trend for tobacco use follows that of drug use. All administrators felt that this problem had generally remained constant.

**Graph 8**  
**Substance Use Frequency**



Seventy-six (76%) of reporting high schools had taken disciplinary action against students for the use or sale of alcohol. Thirty-three percent (33%) of junior highs, 30% of middle schools and 57% of other schools had taken similar action. The most common action was suspension from school and/or athletic activities. Only 11% of high schools, 4% of junior high schools, 15% of middle schools and 8% of other schools reported taking disciplinary action for the use or sale of drugs.

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**S.D. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S TASK FORCE ON DRUGS  
SURVEY TO SCHOOLS ON DRUG-RELATED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Please answer each of the following questions concerning students in your school. Generally, in this survey, drugs and alcohol are considered to be separate categories of substance abuse. Section "D" concerns disciplinary action for drugs and Section "E" is for disciplinary action for alcohol usage.

**A. Description of School**

1. Grades in School  
 Senior High School: Grades 9-12                       Middle School: Grades 6-8  
 Senior High School: Grades 10-12                       Middle School: Grades 5-8  
 Junior High School: Grades 7-9                       Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 Junior High School: Grades 7-8
2. Total Number of Students in the School Indicated in #1. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Type of School  
 Public School                       BIA School  
 Private School                       Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )
4. Position of Person Completing Form  
 Principal                       Counselor  
 Superintendent                       Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )
5. Location of School  
 Western South Dakota  
 Central South Dakota  
 Eastern South Dakota

**B. Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Situation in Your School**

6. In your opinion, how serious of an overall abuse problem do your students have in the following substances abuse categories?

	No Problem			Some Problem			Serious Problem		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	6	7
Smoking Tobacco	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Chewing Tobacco	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Alcohol	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Cannabis (marijuana, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Cocaine (crack)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Hallucinogens (LSD, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Stimulants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Depressants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Opiates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Other ( _____ )	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

7. In your opinion, is the frequency of overall drug usage among your students increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same, as compared with three years ago?  
 Higher today than three years ago  
 About the same today, as it was three years ago  
 Lower today than three years ago
8. In your opinion, is the frequency of alcohol usage among your students increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same, as compared with three years ago?  
 Higher today than three years ago  
 About the same today, as it was three years ago  
 Lower today than three years ago
9. In your opinion, is the frequency of overall tobacco usage among your students increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same, as compared with three years ago?  
 Higher today than three years ago  
 About the same today, as it was three years ago  
 Lower today than three years ago

**C. Disciplinary Action**

10. Have any of your students been disciplined by your school or school district officials for drug and/or alcohol incidents during the 1991-1992 school year?  
 YES    NO  
     Any Disciplinary Action for Drugs?  
     Any Disciplinary Action for Alcohol?

If you answered yes to disciplinary action for drugs or alcohol, please complete Section D (Questions 11-13) below for drug incidents and/or Section E (Questions 14-15) for alcohol incidents.

.....  
If you indicated that there has been no disciplinary action by your school for either drugs or alcohol, you have completed the survey. Please send in the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope within two weeks. Thank you for your help with this important survey.  
.....

**D. Disciplinary Action: DRUGS**

11. How many of your students were disciplined in each of the following ways for using **drugs** during the 1991-1992 school year?

- 1. Suspension from school
- 2. Expulsion from school
- 3. Other disciplinary action

12. How many of your students were disciplined in each of the following ways for selling **drugs** during the 1991-1992 school year?

- 1. Suspension from school
- 2. Expulsion from school
- 3. Other disciplinary action

13. Please indicate (by percent) the drug(s) being used by the students which caused the drug-related disciplinary action (e.g., if 10 percent of those who were disciplined were caught using/selling cocaine, place 10% in the cocaine category, etc.). The total percent of drugs involved should equal 100 percent. If several drugs were involved in some case(s), use the drug believed to be the most prevalent in causing the need for disciplinary action in determining percents.

- Opiates
- Cocaine
- Cannabis (marijuana, etc.)
- Hallucinogens (LSD, etc.)
- Stimulants
- Depressants
- Other/Unknown

**E. Disciplinary Action: ALCOHOL**

14. How many of your students were disciplined in each of the following ways for using **alcohol** during the 1991-1992 school year?

- 1. Suspension from school
- 2. Expulsion from school
- 3. Other disciplinary action

15. How many of your students were disciplined in each of the following ways for selling **alcohol** during the 1991-1992 school year?

- 1. Suspension from school
- 2. Expulsion from school
- 3. Other disciplinary action