

TOPIC

Drug Addition and Gang Affiliation

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Many students at Alexandria City High School are abusers of drugs and are often involved in gangs. Students struggling with these issues are more likely to be behind academically. With being behind academically, students don't graduate, and are not set up for success in their futures. This matters at our school because of how many students struggle with this, and I think if we were to find ways to motivate them to do better there would be a way higher success rate at ACHS.

BASELINE DATA & GOAL

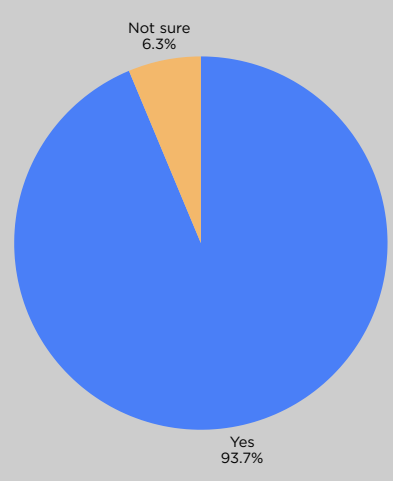
We know that plenty of students struggle with these issues, and our goal is to motivate them to be more academically successful. According to the Alexandria youth risk behavior data analysis, 62% of teenagers in Alexandria use drugs. My goal is to bring this percentage down to a 30% and encourage more and more struggling students not to use drugs or become gang affiliated.

CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

The CYCP goal that connects to my issue is Academic Environment and Success. This connects to my issue because the drugs and gang affiliation distracts students from being academically successful.

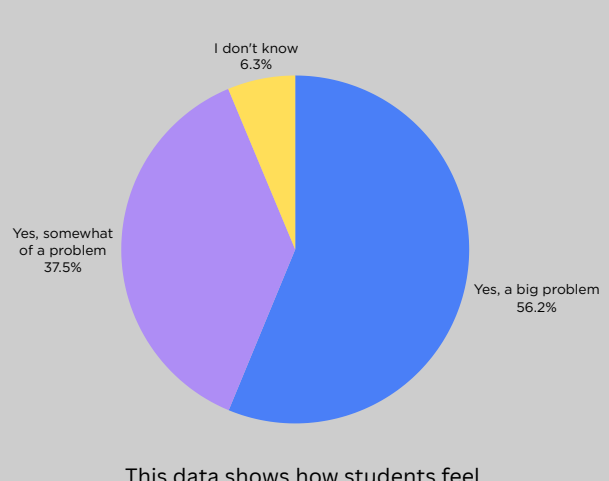
WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

Do you think more students should stop using drugs?



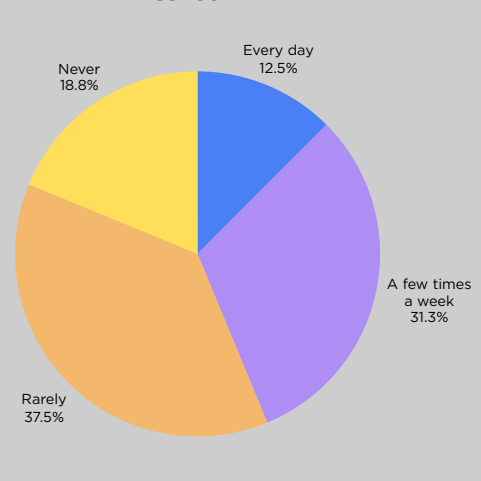
This data shows how students feel about other students using drugs. Majority of the students said no, and this is important because it shows that it is not just adults who want to see this kind of change.

Do you think drugs is a problem at our school?



This data shows how students feel about drugs at our school, and whether or not its a big problem. Majority of the students said its a big problem, whilst other students said yes, but that it was only somewhat of a problem. This is important because no matter the issue being big or small, students still feel like this is an issue.

How often do you see students use drugs in school?



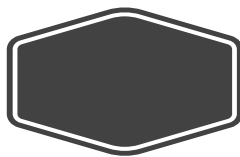
This data shows how often students see other students use drugs in school. Majority of the students said rarely, whilst the other students said a few times a week and never, and then a portion of the students said every day/ This is important because students didn't just completely say no, which means this is still an issue.

WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

ACPS has implemented strict rules regarding drugs and gang affiliation within our school, and have also brought in authorities to students who break these rules. There's also already a youth program dedicated to motivating struggling students.

WHO CAN HELP?

Ana Bonilla would be a very big help because she already is the organizer of an ACHS youth program dedicated to this issue, but I believe working with her can improve the youth program and really make a difference with these students. Terry Wright would also be another great addition, she works with seniors and can encourage seniors to give their younger peers advice and get more involved in the program.



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Rules have been implemented at ACHS, and they have a youth program for this specific issue. I believe the rules is whats making this issue become more fixable, since students get scared of the consequences they'd receive for breaking these rules. However, I also think its just further pushing them more into doing it especially outside of school.

IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

From what students have expressed in my survey as well as what I've personally seen attending ACHS, these actions are still not enough for students to completely stop. Based on the answers from my survey, students still think drugs and gang affiliation is a big issue specifically at our school.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE? (YOUR SOLUTION)

I want this program to be able to motivate students to find other ways to cope with what they might be dealing with, and focus on school and put their energy into something that helps them succeed. Whether its a sport, or a club, or talking to peers that go through the same things, I want these students to be able to make it across the stage and really create a life for themselves instead of struggling. Many students at ACHS also want the same, seeing as in my survey I got a lot of similar responses regarding how students felt about motivating these struggling students.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

It will improve the academic success of those once struggling students, and ensure more students are set up in their futures.

CITATIONS

References

Gang and Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention. (2024, December 19). City of Alexandria, VA. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/GangPrevention>

National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics. (2025). Teenage Drug & Alcohol use: Statistics, Facts and Data. NCDAS; National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics. <https://drugabusestatistics.org/teen-drug-use/>

Northern Virginia Gang Prevention Resources. (2023, December 11). City of Alexandria, VA. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/gang-prevention/northern-virginia-gang-prevention-resources>

Substance Abuse Prevention & Educational Intervention - Alexandria City Public Schools. (n.d.). [Www.acps.k12.Va.us](https://www.acps.k12.Va.us). <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/programs-services/substance-abuse-prevention-educational-intervention>

Youth Gang Programs and Strategies. (n.d.). Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/library/publications/youth-gang-programs-and-strategies>

LEARN MORE

Substance use prevention & early intervention via the acps website is a good way to understand more about this issue. Another great website is Gang and Youth Violence Protection via AlexandriaVA.gov. This website furthermore explains why getting out of these struggles is so important.