

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ATHENS
STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

#456

Adopted: 8/12/92 Revised: 5/13/98

The School District of Athens accepts its responsibility to develop policy, procedures and establish resources for the purpose of providing an optimal environment for the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of its students. The school believes that this responsibility is jointly shared with the community and extended community agencies and families to create positive conditions that strengthen individual skills needed to lead healthy and productive lives.

In addition to scholastic pursuits, students need to develop self-respect and respect for others, a willingness to accept responsibility, and the ability to make sound decisions and interact effectively by providing an environment conducive to developing these skills which requires an active combined effort from home, school, and community.

The school recognizes that involvement with alcohol and other mood altering substances may interfere with the student's school performance, health, safety, welfare, educational opportunity, or those same rights of others. A concentrated effort at prevention and intervention reduces the severity of such problems and increases the student's ability to effectively respond to other life situations.

Because of the significant correlation between the risk of developing alcoholism or other chemical dependencies and early use, the District believes in the necessity of teaching and promoting a non-use philosophy in regard to alcohol and other mood altering substances.

It is known that alcoholism and other chemical dependencies are illnesses that must be identified early, acknowledged, and given appropriate attention in order to improve chances for a successful recovery. Because of this premise, the District will focus its AODA-related education PK-12 with prevention and intervention stressed throughout.

The school shares with the family and the community a concern for the resolution of problems that interfere with the students' optimal potential. Likewise, the school recognizes that alcohol and mood altering substance use may cause health, safety, and legal problems that interfere with learning. The student's alcohol and other substance related concerns are complex and require varied responses. The school's goal is to help students recognize those behaviors that may indicate alcohol and other substance related problems and to encourage them to seek help.

It is the responsibility of all employees of the district to report suspected cases of alcohol or other drug abuse to the proper authority within the school.

All staff will be expected to adhere to the format as outlined in the *Student Handbooks* and *Co-Curricular Code*.

**ATHENS SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION AND POLICY STATEMENT FOR
THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN REGARD TO STUDENT ALCOHOL
AND MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCE USE AS WELL AS OTHER "SOCIAL"
CONCERNS**

In light of the preceding philosophy statement, the School District of Athens sees the need to establish a student assistance program to provide education, assistance, and support to help students, family, and community affected by alcohol and other mood altering substance abuse and related problems.

The District recognizes that students often need assistance and education because a person significant to them is chemically dependent or because they require support in their own decisions not to use or abuse alcohol and/or other mood altering substances.

Since the abuse of alcohol and other mood altering substances frequently precedes chemical dependency, the District sees it necessary to provide education and assistance to any student displaying the signs of such harmful involvement.

Chemical dependency has a better chance of being successfully treated if identified early if appropriate referral to community agencies is made, if adequate support is afforded those who are in the process of recovery, and if support is available to those considered "affected others".

The District also recognizes that students can experience a number of other personal, behavioral, and/or medical problems that can have an adverse effect on their behavior, conduct, or academic performance in school. Such problems could include learning disabilities, physical illness or problems, emotional and psychological problems, family or legal problems, peer or social problems, or other personal problems. The District becomes concerned when any of these problems which may occur in a student or in a family member or friend, repeatedly, and definitely interferes with a student's school performance, or jeopardizes the healthy, safety, welfare, educational opportunity, or rights of other students or personnel.

Therefore, the District's Student Assistance Program will also aim to provide education, assistance, and support to help students, family, and community affected by these other problems as well. It will provide these services through the following means:

1. The responsibility to maintain satisfactory levels of academic performance and general conduct remains with the student whether in school, at school-sponsored events, or on school grounds. It should be understood by parents, students, and staff that all school rules and regulations will be enforced and applicable state and federal laws will be followed. The District's policy on student rights and responsibilities will be adhered to as the standard administrative practice regarding student discipline and students' rights.
2. The District will delegate responsibility for operating the student assistance program to a designated coordinator(s). The coordinator(s) will interpret the district's policy to students, staff, parents, and the community. The coordinator and/or designated staff person(s) will evaluate the nature and scope of the problem in students who have been referred and make recommendations for the appropriate form of assistance.

3. An essential feature of the student assistance program is that all contacts with the program will be handled confidentially in the manner that state and federal law permits. Students along with their families are encouraged to contact the coordinator(s), staff, or the building principal regarding problems with the assurance that such confidentiality will be respected.
4. Students may be referred to the coordinator by school staff, other students, parents, or community agencies (i.e. clergy, law enforcement, etc.).
5. Staff members are expected to complete a referral on any student who exhibits a definite decline in his/her academic performance and/or a repeated pattern of behavior which is unacceptable or manifests any signs, symptoms, or indications of a behavioral/medical problem. This referral process focuses on both the student with the problem themselves and the student affected by the stress from a family member or friend manifesting the problem.
6. When a referral is made by staff or other concerned person, the coordinator or designee will consult with the student and contact other staff, if permitted by law, in an attempt to evaluate the nature and scope of the student's problem.
7. On the basis of the evaluation, the coordinator or designee may recommend one or more of the following courses of action:
 - A. No apparent reason for immediate concern; no apparent chemical problem.
 - B. No apparent chemical problem, but another personal issue warrants a referral to a counselor or other resource.
 - C. Continued one-to-one involvement with the coordinator, appropriate staff person, or school counselor.
 - D. Continued involvement with the coordinator and appropriate group experiences.
 - E. Referral for outside evaluation.
 - F. Involvement in Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, ALATEEN, Adult Children of Alcoholics, or other outside services.
8. At all times, it is the prerogative of the student and family to accept or reject referral to or participation in either the student assistance program or outside assistance. Regardless of whether a student accepts or rejects assistance, it still remains his/her responsibility to maintain satisfactory levels of performance and conduct or face standard and legitimate disciplinary actions.
9. No negative discrimination will be shown toward a student who accepts referral and/or outside treatment.
10. A student's participation in the program, including conversations he may have with staff members or the coordinator will be held confidential and will not become a part of his/her record in accordance with state and federal law.
11. It shall be the responsibility of building administrator(s) and student assistance coordinator(s) to develop procedures consistent with these policies and to provide the necessary orientation and training of staff persons. The building administrator(s) and the student assistance coordinator(s) will periodically evaluate the progress of the program and its effectiveness and make annual reports and recommendations to the district administrator.

