

# TELEMASP BULLETIN

## TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

June 1995

Vol. 2, No. 3

### Drug Abuse Resistance Education

#### Background

In 1983 the Los Angeles Police Department, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District, created the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. Three years later, LAPD employed the only 19 D.A.R.E. officers in the country; six years after its creation, the program had been introduced to 3,000,000+ children in 80,000 classrooms. By 1991, there were 102 D.A.R.E. officers in the state of Texas alone (Bryant 1991), and by 1993 the program was taught in English, Spanish and Braille in every state, and in military and American Indian schools (Harmon 1993).

The ultimate goal of D.A.R.E. is to help students acquire positive self-images and pressure-management skills, and to resist negative influences in peer groups, the media and at home (Marx et al. 1988). Trained officers instruct students about self-esteem, decision-making and alternatives to drug use. The program is based on long-term solutions to the drug abuse problem, rather than reactive drug busts. While other police directives aim to reduce the supply of illegal drugs into the country, D.A.R.E. focuses on reducing demand from students before they are confronted with high-pressure decisions regarding drugs (Gates 1986).

During the semester, D.A.R.E. typically follows a predetermined series of topics, approximately 50 minutes each in length. They are entitled:

1. Practices for personal safety
2. Drug use and misuse
3. Consequences
4. Resisting pressures to use drugs
5. Resistance techniques—ways to say no
6. Building self-esteem
7. Assertiveness—a response style
8. Managing stress without taking drugs
9. Media influences on drug use
10. Decision-making and risk-taking
11. Alternatives to drug use
12. Other activities
13. Officer-planned lesson
14. Role modeling
15. Project DARE summary
16. Taking a stand
17. Assembly and graduation (Becker et al. 1992)

Drug use follows a pattern, usually beginning with cigarettes and alcohol and progressing to harder drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. The usage often increases from occasional to frequent. Most high school seniors have consumed alcohol, and many have smoked cigarettes or marijuana



(Harmon 1993). Drugs such as these are considered "gateway" drugs. Theoretically, by targeting the initial stages of gateway drug use, rather than rehabilitation after addiction, programs can enhance their effectiveness by preventing usage and subsequent abuse.

D.A.R.E. is a direct contact, social skills program that does not use fear to appeal to pre-teens. Minimizing lecture and presentation of "straight facts," activities include student participation, question/answer sessions, group discussions and role-playing. It is suggested that this approach also decreases truancy and vandalism by participants and raises their grade point averages (Bryant 1991).

#### KEY ELEMENTS OF D.A.R.E.

**Joint Planning.** School administrators meet with police officials to discuss program initiation.

**Written Agreement.** A contract between police and educators is made.

**Officer Selection.** A panel of citizens selects highly qualified officers.

**Officer Training.** Officers typically undergo 80 training hours taught by fellow trainees, officer trainers and teachers.

**Core Curriculum.** A standard curriculum includes 17 one-hour sessions taught over the course of a school year, usually once a week.

**Classroom Instruction.** One officer visits four or five schools per semester or year while other officers spend one day a week speaking to community groups or completing paperwork.

**Informal Student-Officer Interaction.** Students are given the opportunity to share personal problems or questions which officers can refer to the appropriate authorities (Bryant 1991).

#### Evaluations of D.A.R.E.

After 10 years of existence, the D.A.R.E. program can be evaluated through longitudinal or long-term studies. Using meta-analysis, the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) completed a study and found that "D.A.R.E. has no statistically significant effect on drug use and was less effective than other programs." Although the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) commissioned the study, both NIJ and D.A.R.E. America rejected the conclusions due to alleged flaws in the methodology. NIJ refused to publish the full results.

The RTI report analyzed eight studies involving 9,300 children. Jeremy Travis, Director of NIJ, related that independent reviewers unanimously rejected the study's methodology and the use of obsolete data. However, one reviewer advised that "They may be misremembering what I said" (Cauchon 1994). To liven up the debate between RTI and NIJ, the prestigious *American Journal of Public Health* published the report after approval from the journal's expert reviewers.

One can only speculate on the limitations of RTI's study. For example, the reported proportion of subjects' race indicated an overreliance of data from white students and, since the study examined secondary data not collected specifically for RTI's analysis, it would be more difficult to control for errors. The study focused on immediate rather than long-term effects of D.A.R.E., and only those programs aimed at children in the upper elementary grades were analyzed. One result was that interactive drug education programs that place less emphasis on lectures are more likely to positively affect juvenile behavior. The study provides an excellent list of both published and unpublished evaluations of D.A.R.E. and comparable drug education programs (Ennett et al. 1994).

The Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching researched the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. using 3,000 fifth-graders of whom one-



half were exposed to D.A.R.E. and one-half were not. Findings revealed that school-based drug programs were the best source of conveying information about drugs. D.A.R.E. augmented students' attitudes about resisting drugs and tended to maintain, rather than decrease their use of any drug. However, both peer pressure and use of any drug by fifth-graders was rare (Becker et al. 1992).

In a 1993 evaluation of D.A.R.E. in Charleston County, South Carolina, the program was deemed effective in that fifth-graders' attitudes toward drug use improved, and assertiveness and self-esteem increased. The following recommendations were offered: (1) substitute peer leaders as instructors, since D.A.R.E. did not consistently improve students' perceptions of police officers; (2) change the focus of D.A.R.E. to also include problem behaviors in general; (3) encourage students to practice in real life the lessons learned in the classroom; and (4) conduct "booster sessions" as the students mature during adolescence (Harmon 1993).

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* published the results of a long-term study on a school-based drug abuse prevention program and found that the implementation process and at least two years of booster sessions were critical to a program's success. The drug behaviors of mostly white seventh-graders were reevaluated in twelfth grade after three years of exposure, including booster sessions, to the program. There were significant reductions (66%) in targeted behaviors (Botvin et al. 1995).

The *Houston Chronicle* noted the political popularity of D.A.R.E. that draws over a \$155 million budget (Marlow et al. 1994) and USA Today estimated D.A.R.E.'s total revenues from Department of Justice, Department of Education, local governments and private donors to be \$700 million (Cauchon 1994).

## The TELEMASP Survey

Forty-one Texas law enforcement agencies participated in a survey regarding their departments' drug education programs. Of the 34 (83%) departments that have a type of drug education program, 27 (67%) specifically use D.A.R.E. Departments that do not participate in a drug education program were divided into three categories: (1) those currently without the resources, (2) those where drug programs would not be expected (i.e., on a college campus), and (3) those that share a jurisdiction with another agency that already has a program (i.e., school district police, county sheriff's office). For clarity, departments that either do not employ drug programs or use non-D.A.R.E. programs are omitted from the survey results.

Although all drug prevention programs surveyed focused on one principal issue (e.g., gangs, drugs, guns, truancy), all shared similar means in helping students to improve their self-esteem and assertiveness. This bulletin focuses specifically on D.A.R.E. since it is the most popular law enforcement/drug program initiated in Texas.

## Results

One objective of the TELEMASP survey was to determine the similarities and differences between the state's D.A.R.E. programs. Results indicate that some characteristics are uniform throughout the state while others are quite varied.

### How much time does each officer spend in the classroom?

Fourteen (52%) departments place officers in each classroom for 21 or more hours each school year, 10 (37%) departments spend 16 to 20 hours and three programs report spending 1 to 15 hours per class, per school year.

### **How closely do D.A.R.E. officers follow the D.A.R.E. program?**

Nineteen (70%) departments follow the program "exactly as outlined" in the D.A.R.E. handbook, and the remainder follow it "pretty closely." Not one department reported following D.A.R.E. "half-way," "somewhat" or "almost none." Some departments use a combination of approaches such as several programs in the same classroom. However, since these practices may result in the national D.A.R.E. organization terminating the program for that department, one should not rely on all responses indicating how closely the program is followed.

### **In what types of schools is D.A.R.E. implemented?**

Of the D.A.R.E. programs polled, all send officers to the district's public schools. About one-third (36%) of the programs include private schools in the district, and about one-half of the participating police departments teach at parochial schools. A majority of the programs (63%) are taught in "urban" and "suburban" schools. Thirty-three percent of the D.A.R.E. programs sponsor schools considered "rural."

### **What are the qualifications of D.A.R.E. officers in Texas?**

A large variation was found in survey responses. No two departments have the same qualifications for an officer to be employed in the D.A.R.E. program. Most stress that it is a voluntary assignment and usually require two years of experience on the force. One department requires two years of college while another department prefers four. Some candidates must appear before a review board while others simply have an interview with the chief or a lieutenant. To be considered for a D.A.R.E. post, a minimum three-year contract is written by one department but other departments employ officers who "work well with peers" or "show initiative."

### **How are D.A.R.E. programs funded?**

An overwhelming majority of the moneys necessary to operate the state's D.A.R.E. programs are provided by the departments. State grants and fundraisers comprise the other most commonly tapped sources. The smallest D.A.R.E. program participating in the survey reports a budget of \$41,000 for two officers, including personnel costs, and the largest program in the survey reports a \$2+ million budget for 55 officers, including personnel costs. Very little funding is provided by the PTA, local/city grants, or federal grants.

### **What sort of material items are given to D.A.R.E. participants?**

Responses varied with respect to prizes that are awarded to participating D.A.R.E. students. Certificates and stickers/bumperstickers were the most common items given by 96 percent of the programs, followed closely by pens, pencils, and t-shirts (92%). Table 1 illustrates the wide range of rewards given to D.A.R.E. students.

### **How much training do D.A.R.E. officers receive?**

Table 2 outlines the amount of training D.A.R.E. officers in Texas receive.

### **Should the students and the D.A.R.E. officer be of the same race?**

Fifty-eight percent of the departments surveyed did not feel it was important to "match" officer and student population race, and 74 percent of D.A.R.E. programs in the state reported not taking race into account when making hiring and placement decisions.

### **What are the gender characteristics of the state's D.A.R.E. officers?**

Of the 27 responding departments with D.A.R.E. programs, one-third do not employ any women

**Table 1**

**Rewards given to students, in descending order of frequency**

Certificates	D.A.R.E. Store Items
Stickers/Bumperstickers	"Parent Committees"
T-Shirts	"Name a Drug-Free Organization"
Pens/Pencils	"Decathlon"
Notebooks/Folders	Backpacks
Business Cards	Trophies
Keychains	Magnets
Rulers	Graduate Cards
Bookmarks	Jackets
Mugs	Sports Cards
Workbooks	Pencil Pouches
Book Covers	Yo-Yos
Pins	Plaques
Erasers	Ribbons
Buttons	Desk Name Cards
Bracelets	"Incentive Cards"
Water Bottles	Banners
Frisbees	Identification Cards
Hats	"The Graduate"
Badges	Lunch Bags
"Name the D.A.R.E. Bear"	Medallions
Balloons	Duffel Bags
	Police Trading Cards

**Table 2**

**Amount of training for D.A.R.E. officers in Texas**

<b>Pretraining</b>		<b>In-Service Training</b>	
0-40 Hours	(18%)	0-40 Hours	(96%)
41-70 Hours	---	41-70 Hours	(4%)
71-91 Hours	(59%)	71-91 Hours	---
92+ Hours	(22%)	92+ Hours	---



officers while all employed at least one male officer. On average, women comprise 23 percent of the D.A.R.E. units that responded (174 men, 53 women). According to the Uniform Crime Reports, women comprise 9 percent of sworn officers. They are thus overrepresented among D.A.R.E. officers. However, the number of women does not exceed the number of men in any D.A.R.E. unit.

**Do most D.A.R.E. officers work full-time, and how long do they retain their D.A.R.E. assignments?**

Of 224 D.A.R.E. officers, 152 (68%) are full-time. Eleven departments (5%) have only full-time D.A.R.E. officers, and three departments have only part-time D.A.R.E. officers. Generally speaking, the officers are appointed to the unit permanently, barring voluntary transfer or disciplinary action against the officer.

**What grades use D.A.R.E. programming?**

D.A.R.E. is rooted in grades K through 6. The trend appears to be a slow expansion to junior high/middle and high school. Currently, only three of the responding D.A.R.E. units teach in grades 10-12, 13 maintain classes in grades 7-9 and all except two are incorporated into the 5th grade, for which D.A.R.E. was originally designed.

**Are there waiting lists of students for the D.A.R.E. program?**

Of all D.A.R.E. units, 44 percent have a waiting list.

**What can we expect to see in the near future of D.A.R.E. in Texas?**

Both long- and short-term goals for Texas D.A.R.E. divisions are relatively uniform. Almost all of the goals include increasing the number of officers or funding. Several departments plan to expand D.A.R.E. to grades not currently covered and

some departments expect to implement a D.A.R.E. parenting program.

**How would D.A.R.E. officers feel if D.A.R.E. were somehow proven ineffective?**

Table 3 contains excerpts from responses to a hypothetical question regarding the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. Overall, 85 percent of the departments would recommend D.A.R.E.'s continuation even if evaluation data showed its ineffectiveness. This is not surprising given the program's popularity. The following explanation summarizes the responses of the 15 percent who would not recommend D.A.R.E.'s continuance: "If D.A.R.E. is determined to be ineffective in deterring drug abuse, why waste the juveniles, officers' and teachers' time in teaching something that doesn't work, when a more productive program could take its place that can deter drug abuse?"

**What about the departments without D.A.R.E.?**

Seven of the departments without D.A.R.E. use some other type of drug education program (see insets), and seven without D.A.R.E. do not use any type of drug education programs. Of those without programs, two plan to implement non-D.A.R.E. programs within the coming year.

**Current outlook for D.A.R.E. in Texas**

Drug Abuse Resistance Education is widely implemented in Texas. Some departments express fear that current drug education programs are at risk of budget cuts or complete elimination, but others have plans to expand to more schools, with additional officers and financial resources. There is still much to be researched about D.A.R.E.'s effectiveness. What does seem clear, however, is that departments which have implemented D.A.R.E. wholeheartedly support its continuation. However, several departments are satisfied with other alternative drug- or gang-resistance programs.

**Table 3**

**Responses to the hypothetical question, "If D.A.R.E. is determined to be ineffective in deterring drug use among juveniles:"**

- "The students need someone to answer their questions, provide honest information and serve as positive role models. I know that our program provides this."
- "The positive role we can create with them is not measurable."
- "In my opinion there is no way to show the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of D.A.R.E., therefore I would encourage its continuance."
- "I do not put a lot of faith in evaluation programs. I would provide my chain of command with my opinion and they would have to make that decision."
- "[D.A.R.E.] is the best source currently available to teach students valuable lessons."
- "Even if we only help one child the program is worth it."
- "I do not believe it will be determined ineffective."
- "Please notify me if you can empirically refute the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. while subjectively ignoring the 'bigger picture'."
- "I feel that this is a very effective program."
- "[We will continue the D.A.R.E. program] because there is a tremendous demand for this program from parents, students, and educators within our community who feel that D.A.R.E. is a deterrent."
- "[T]he intrinsic value that the program provides is truly invaluable."
- "If we depend on surveys and studies to determine the effectiveness of D.A.R.E., we are not taking into account the bond formed between the D.A.R.E. officer and the student."

## TEXAS DRUG EDUCATION—A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES

### L.E.T.S.

The Dallas Police Department utilizes the Law Enforcement Teaching Students (L.E.T.S.) program. Dallas Independent School District's (D.I.S.D.) 27,000 4th- and 6th-grade students participate in this program designed to heighten drug awareness and consequences, to teach students how to resist peer pressure and to provide positive contact between police and students. Five other police departments have adopted Dallas P.D.'s curriculum.

### G.R.E.A.T.

Of departments participating in the survey, Deer Park and Beaumont Police Departments use the Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program designed to curtail gang violence. It is taught during the school year to 7th graders by uniformed police officers and then reinforced in a follow-up summer project. Eight lessons cover such topics as "Risk Factors of Gang/Drug Involvement," "Goal Setting," "Meeting Basic Needs" and "Cultural Sensitivity/Prejudice."

### AMARILLO

Amarillo P.D. uses school liaison officers to teach a variety of lessons. Since the D.A.R.E. program was determined to be impractical and too costly for Amarillo's needs, a series of seminars were created and conducted on an as-needed basis. This arrangement allows for lower costs and a more flexible range of subjects.

### INFLUENCING ADULTS

Students are not the only ones who benefit from D.A.R.E. One program reports that some parents stopped smoking because of the lessons presented to their children, at least one teacher significantly changed his lifestyle after D.A.R.E. was implemented in his classroom, and an instructor has not consumed alcohol in six years while teaching D.A.R.E.

### FORT WORTH

Fort Worth Police Department will use the passage of a city sales tax increase to raise departmental funding, some of which would be diverted to D.A.R.E.

### SUBSTITUTE INSTRUCTORS

According to the TELEMASP survey, the Beaumont P.D. uses substitute officers who had previously been in the D.A.R.E. unit when the usual instructors are ill or on vacation.

### P.R.I.D.E.

The Irving Police Department allocates two officers to each of its 17 elementary schools as part of the Positive Role models In Drug Education (P.R.I.D.E.) program taught to 4th and 5th grade students. Officers are trained by both the police department and the school district. The program culminates in an appreciation day known as "Cowboys, Cops & Kids." Long-term plans are to include all grades K-6, and to hire all P.R.I.D.E. officers on a full-time basis. The current budget is \$27,000 for 32 officers, including personnel costs.

### CHOICES

The Garland Police Department recently implemented the CHOICES program, based on similar programs used by the Arlington and Denton fire departments. CHOICES is a one-shot, multimedia presentation designed to dissuade students from drinking and driving by abstaining from underage drinking. Slide and audio imagery includes photos of accident scenes and victims' testimonies. Students also receive a crash course on Texas' drunk driving laws and the penalties for breaking them.

### TRADING CARDS

One of the rewards that students in the San Antonio D.A.R.E. program receive is a police officer "trading card." On the front is a photo of the officer, and on the back are reminders about how to resist drugs.

COLLECT THEM ALL

EXAMPLES OF TRADING CARDS  
Awarded to Students Who Participate in D.A.R.E.



Front

"Education And Success  
Go Hand In Hand,  
Don't Sell Yourself Short!"

19  
B472 **DETECTIVE AL CAVALIER**  
Juvenile Crime Unit

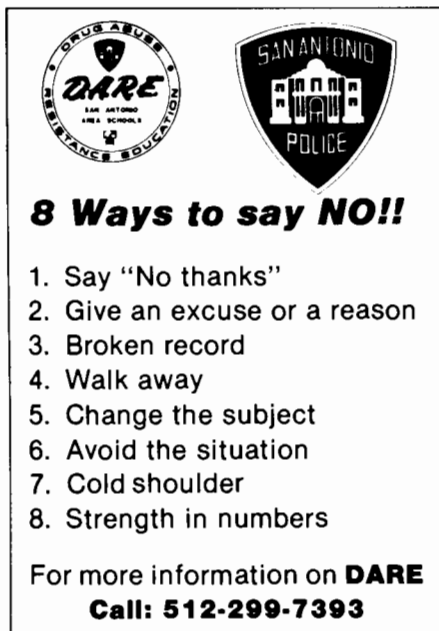
**DETECTIVE CAVALIER SAYS,**

"Gangs, drugs, alcohol are the easy way out - nothing worth having comes easy - education and family are the only secrets for success, use them."

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Back



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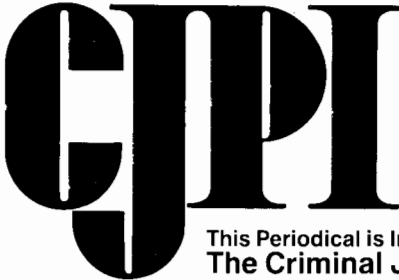
**OFFICER CARLOS THOMPSON**  
Instructor

Front

Courtesy of the San Antonio Police Department

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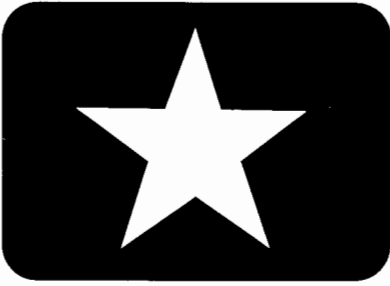
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A future bulletin will address the related issue of school resource officers. The April'95 Bulletin addressed ISD Police.



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