S P I R I T

Missouri School-based Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention and Resource Initiative

Hickman Mills School District Sixth Year Report

2007 –2008

Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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The Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse is pleased to present this Sixth Year Report of the Missouri School-based Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention Resources Initiative (SPIRIT). The report, prepared by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH), was made possible through the Division's partnership with five school districts: Knox County, Hickman Mills (Kansas City), Ritenour (St. Louis), New Madrid County, and Carthage (Jasper County).

SPIRIT objectives are to delay onset and decrease use of substances, improve overall school performance, and reduce incidents of violence. The report shows positive outcomes and suggests future enhancements.

I hope it gives you a deeper understanding of this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Mark Stringer
Director

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2002, the Missouri Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) launched the School-based Prevention Intervention and Resources IniTiative (SPIRIT) in five school districts in the state, including Hickman Mills. The project proposes to delay the onset and decrease the use of substances, improve overall school performance, and reduce incidents of violence. To achieve these goals, prevention agencies are paired with participating school districts to provide technical assistance in implementing evidence-based substance abuse prevention programming and referral and assessment services as needed.

In Hickman Mills, Swope Parkway Health Center is paired with the district. Providers teach all programs associated with SPIRIT. Second Step and some lessons from Too Good for Drugs are taught at Burke Elementary. Second Step is taught by providers to middle school students at Smith-Hale Middle School, and providers also teach Reconnecting Youth to 9th grade students at Ruskin High School. This report provides outcomes related to the main goals of SPIRIT in the sixth year of its implementation.

Methods

The SPIRIT evaluation, conducted by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health's Division of Child and Family Mental Health Services Research, uses a variety of data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and school records (see Measures box below).

All students (n = 1328) at Burke Elementary, Smith-Hale Middle School, and some 9th grade students at Ruskin High participated in the SPIRIT project. Parental consent was required to take part in the evaluation, and consent was obtained for 93.4% of all participating students. Each consented student is assigned a unique identification code to track their responses and to ensure confidentiality. Baseline data are initially collected for every consented student in Kindergarten, fourth, sixth grades and participating ninth graders in the fall semester. Random sampling is used when there is a sufficient number of students in a grade grouping to ease the burden of survey administration on the schools and to increase the reliability of the results. One hundred students per grade grouping (K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12), equally represented by sex and grade, are randomly selected to be surveyed. The sources of evaluation data collected are listed below:

Measures

- Teacher Observation Checklist (K – 3rd grade only): classroom teacher report survey
- SPIRIT questionnaire (4th – 5th & 6th – 12th grade versions): student self-report survey
- Student Perception of Program Effectiveness Survey (2nd – 3rd & 4th – 12th grade versions with same questions for all): student self-report survey
- Teacher and Provider Perception of Program Effectiveness Survey: Teachers who observe and those who implement self-report survey (electronic and paper-pencil versions)
- Program Fidelity Forms: implementer self-report form
- Monthly Reports: provider self-report
- Interviews (Provider, and Principal versions)
- Program Implementation Observations

Comparisons between this District Report and the SPIRIT aggregate report cannot be made. Particular samples, for example specific grade groupings, that will most clearly report the district's characteristics are selected for each district; these may differ from the aggregate.

Summary Outcome Findings

Substance Use

Table 1. Hickman Mills, SPIRIT, Missouri and National Drug Use Comparison					
		Hickman Mills[1]	SPIRIT[2]	Missouri[3]	National[4]
Cigarettes	Lifetime use	15.3%	20.2%	23.3%	23.7%
	Past month (30-day)	4.9%	6.5%	10.1%	9.8%
	Age of initiation	10.96	11.22	11.31	n/a
Alcohol	Lifetime use	58.9%	47.2%	53.6%	39.4%
	Past month (30-day)	11.7%	13.7%	22.3%	15.9%
	Age of initiation	10.44	10.78	11.81	n/a
Marijuana	Lifetime use	13.5%	10.8%	13.9%	16.2%
	Past month (30-day)	3.7%	4.2%	6.1%	6.7%
	Age of initiation	11.48	12.17	12.60	n/a
Inhalants	Lifetime use	4.9%	6.8%	10.4%	9.6%
	Past month (30-day)	3.1%	3.4%	4.6%	1.2%
	Age of initiation	9.75	11.18	n/a	n/a

[1]Hickman Mills, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 163 (average age = 13.08)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 805 (average age = 13.00)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 86,861 (average age = 13.64)
National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

- Fewer youth in the Hickman Mills school district use cigarettes and inhalants than in the total SPIRIT sample, Missouri, and the US. The age of initiation in Hickman Mills, however, was over a year younger than in the SPIRIT sample.

- A greater percentage of youth in Hickman Mills used alcohol than any other substance, more so than in the total SPIRIT sample. Overall use was low, with 88.3% of youth reporting no alcohol use in the past 30 days. Only 3.1% reported binge drinking (five or more drinks on the same occasion) in the past 30 days.

- Over 12% of 6th – 9th grade youth reported riding in a car with someone who had been drinking. Only 2.5% reported driving drunk themselves.

- There was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 30-day marijuana users among 6th – 9th grade youth in Hickman Mills.

Attitudes toward Substance Use

- Youth had more favorable attitudes toward alcohol than cigarettes or marijuana. Youth were more likely to report they might drink when older than smoke cigarettes or marijuana. They were also more likely to believe that most adults drink alcohol than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.

- Alcohol was perceived to pose the least risk of harm, followed by cigarettes and marijuana.

- Cigarettes and alcohol were perceived as being the least wrong substances to use.

Problem Behavior

- Youth were most likely to report being made fun of or making fun of others in the past three months. They were least likely to report being drunk or high at school, using a weapon or being threatened by a weapon.

- The percentage of 6th – 9th grade youth who had been in a physical fight decreased from Year 5 to Year 6 in the Hickman Mills school district.

School Performance

- While the majority of youth (85.2%) received at least one disciplinary incident during the school year, a small percentage (15.9%) was involved in 10 or more incidents.

- About a third of evaluated 8th and 9th grade youth received an in-school suspension and 28.9% had an out-of-school suspension.

Program Satisfaction/Effectiveness

- The majority of youth liked the program, however, some grade levels reported higher satisfaction than others. Second – 3rd grade children and 6th – 8th grade youth were more likely to like the program than 4th – 5th grade and 9th grade youth.

- Youth thought the program was most effective at teaching them anger management and resistance skills (helping them to "say no").

- The program was considered least effective in helping them get along better with others and getting other kids to be nicer to them.

Protective Factors

- The majority of youth were empathetic, had good decision making skills, thought they had caring adults in their lives, and had positive attitudes toward school.

- Youth were more likely to report having caring adults at home than at school.

- Youth reported feeling safer going to and from school than when they were at school.

Recommendations

- Although inhalant use is lower in Hickman Mills than in SPIRIT, Missouri, and the nation, the age of first use is younger in Hickman Mills. Considering this, along with the severe physical consequences of using inhalants, it is recommended that programming include information regarding inhalants at an earlier grade level.

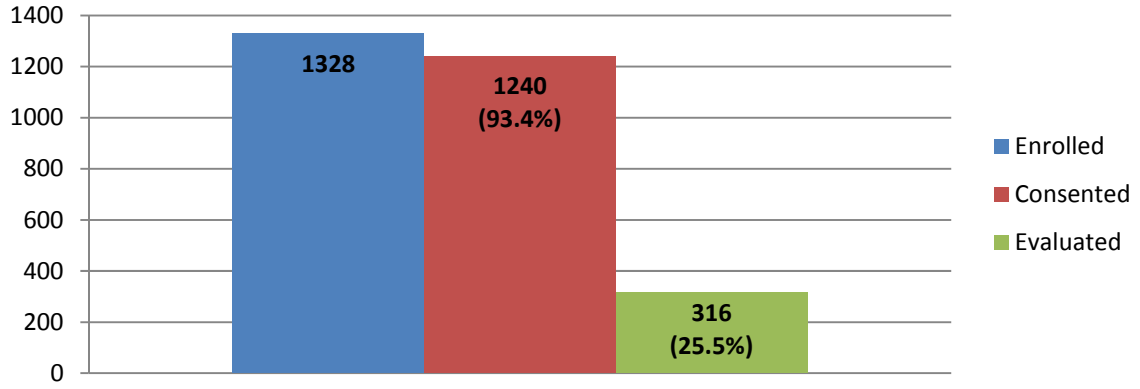
- Alcohol use in Hickman Mills is more accepted than in any other SPIRIT districts. More emphasis should be placed on the physical consequences of using alcohol.

- Programming specifically targeting relational/emotional aggression (making fun of others, spreading rumors, lying, etc.) and the affect of those behaviors on others should be considered.

Chapter 1: Demographics

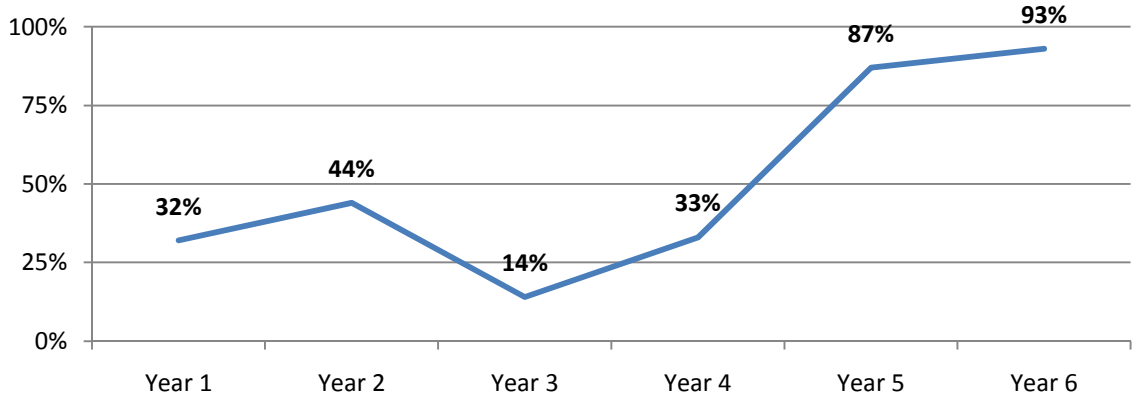
In the sixth year of the SPIRIT project, 1328 children and youth participated in SPIRIT from the Hickman Mills School District. Over 93% (1240) received parental consent for the evaluation. In Spring of 2008 using random sampling, 25.5% (316) of consented students were evaluated.

Figure 1. Youth Enrolled, Consented, and Evaluated in Year 6



The rate of consent increased by 6% from Year 5 to Year 6. [1]

Figure 2. Consent Rates, 2002-2008



Males and females were equally represented among the evaluated participants.

Table 2. Percentage of Evaluated Participants by Sex		
	Hickman Mills	SPIRIT Total
Male	50.5%	54.6%
Female	49.5%	48.4%

[1] Consent rates were lowest in Year 4 because new contracts were established in late Fall of that year when it is more difficult to collect consent forms than at the beginning of the school year.

The majority of the evaluated participants were non-Hispanic Blacks (75.6%) representing a significantly higher rate than that in the SPIRIT total sample, Missouri, and the US. The second highest racial/ethnic group was Hispanics (10.6%). Hispanics represent a higher percentage than that found in the general Missouri population; however it is very similar to the SPIRIT total sample and the US. Non-Hispanic Whites only represented 7.3%, significantly less than SPIRIT, MO, and the US.

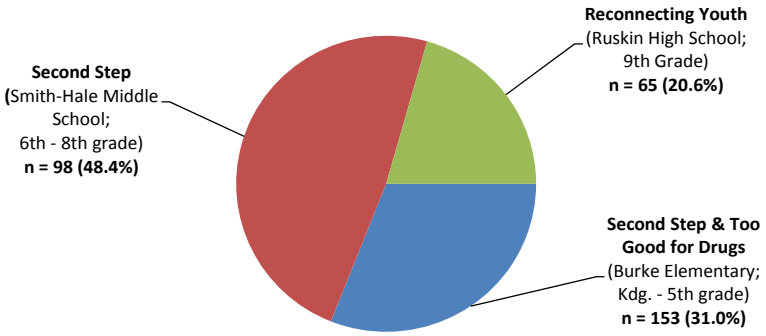
Table 3. Percentage of Evaluated Participants by Race/Ethnicity

	Hickman Mills	SPIRIT Total	MO†	US†
White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	6.7%	50.3%	84.0%	73.9%
Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	75.6%	26.4%	11.3%	12.4%
Native American/Alaskan Native (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	1.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Asian (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	0.4%	2.8%	1.5%	4.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	0.0%	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%
Other (not otherwise specified; Non-Hispanic/Latino)	0.9%	0.4%	1.1%	6.3%
Black & White (Non-Hispanic/Latino)	3.1%	4.3%	n/a	n/a
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	12.0%	14.9%	2.8%	14.8%

† U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Of the SPIRIT evaluation participants, 48.4% were taking part in the Second Step and Too Good for Drugs programs which were taught in the Burke Elementary School (Kdg. – 5th grade), 31.0% were from Smith-Hale Middle School (6th – 8th grade) where they received Second Step, and 20.6% were Reconnecting Youth students in the 9th grade at Ruskin High School.

Figure 3. Percentage of Youth in the Evaluation by Program



Summary

- A large percentage of students (93%) had parental consent for the evaluation.
- African American participants represented a higher percentage of participants than in other SPIRIT sites, Missouri and the US. The Hispanic population was higher than in Missouri as a whole, but similar to other SPIRIT sites and the US.

Chapter 2: The SPIRIT Programs

Evaluators conducted two site visits at Hickman Mills and reviewed monthly reports submitted by prevention specialists. Children and youth participated in Second Step, Too Good for Drugs, or Reconnecting Youth. Below are brief summaries of the prevention programs that are offered at the schools in the district.

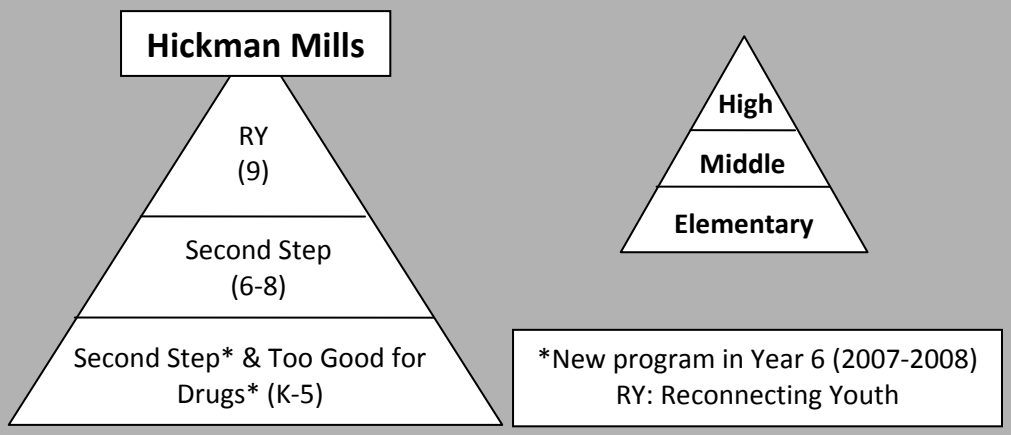
> **"We are blessed to have [SPIRIT] as a resource."**
>
> *— Elementary school principal*

SPIRIT is in one of six elementary schools, one of two middle schools and one of two high schools. Second Step and selected lessons from Too Good for Drugs are taught in the elementary school, Second Step is implemented in the middle school and Reconnecting Youth is offered to some of the 9th grade students in the high school. All programs are nationally recognized. The elementary school prevention programs are new this year because previous evaluations had shown that students needed more emphasis on behavioral alternatives to violence and education about ATOD. Second Step is also taught at the middle school because of the emphasis of the program on these issues. The prevention specialists also work with small groups of selected students on social skills and anger management. RY was chosen as the program for the high school, and particularly targeted ninth grade students because the principal believed that the program would help students who were having personal problems and difficulties with school to get a good start. Provider prevention specialists implement the programs at all schools.

> **"I feel like the second year of the program coincided with the drop in drug use during school time and less fights."**
>
> *—Middle School Principal*

There is a new principal in the elementary school and he was very positive about participation in SPIRIT. Like the other principals, he praised the provider's willingness to step in and work with students on crucial behavioral issues. At the middle school in the 5th year, Second Step was taught by Physical Education (PE) teachers. According to the principal, the PE teachers believe that the change to prevention specialists as teachers has been very positive for youth. She was very pleased to be part of SPIRIT and stated that the use of drugs and the number of fights had decreased, coinciding with the second year of the program. At the high school, specific lessons from RY were taught to many ninth grade students during Freshman Focus in the first semester because scheduling problems made it impossible to implement RY as a class. Although three classes were set up for second semester, students were mandated into credit retrieval classes if warranted, leaving only six students in RY. There are other activities under SPIRIT for the general high school population and additionally, the provider has worked with small groups of students. The principal expressed support for SPIRIT and believes that the program has helped many students to become more involved in school.

Figure 4. Program Implementation, Year 6 (2007-2008)



Chapter 3: Substance Use

The following chapter presents the percentage of youth from Hickman Mills who reported the use of substances at any time in the past (lifetime use) and two substance use indicators from the National Outcome Measures (NOMs): (1) age of first use; and (2) 30-day use. These measures of substance use are compared to the total SPIRIT sample and the most current state and national surveys, the 2008 Missouri Student Survey (MSS) and the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Comparisons between this District Report and the SPIRIT aggregate report cannot be made. Particular samples, for example specific grade groupings, that will most clearly report the district's characteristics are selected for each district; these may differ from the aggregate.

Lifetime Substance Use

Comparisons with SPIRIT, MO, and US

The percentage of youth who have used cigarettes or inhalants in their lifetime is lower among Hickman Mill's youth than the SPIRIT total sample, and the Missouri and US samples. The percentage of alcohol users, however, is higher than SPIRIT, MO, and the US.

Table 4. Lifetime Substance Use: Comparison between Hickman Mills, SPIRIT, MO, and US data (6th – 9th Grade)

	Hickman Mills[1]	SPIRIT Total[2]	MO[3]	US[4]
Cigarettes	15.7%	20.2%	23.3%	23.7%
Alcohol (more than a sip)	58.4%	47.2%	53.6%	39.4%
Marijuana	13.3%	10.8%	13.9%	16.2%
Ecstasy	1.8%	1.5%	n/a	n/a
Methamphetamine	1.2%	1.1%	n/a	n/a
Inhalants	4.9%	6.8%	10.4%	9.6%
Prescription Drugs without Rx	3.1%	4.7%	n/a	n/a
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	8.6%	11.6%	n/a	n/a

[1]Hickman Mills, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 163 (average age = 13.08)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 805 (average age = 13.00)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 86,861 (average age = 13.64)
[4] National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

Lifetime Substance Use by Grade Level

Lifetime use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana increased with every increase in grade level. The drug of choice, regardless of grade level was alcohol with 25.3% of 4th – 5th graders admitting to having "more than just a sip" of alcohol to 64.6% of 9th graders reporting the same.

Table 5. Lifetime Substance Use by Grade Level

	4th – 5th	6th – 8th	9th
Cigarettes	8.4	13.3	23.1
Alcohol (more than a sip)	25.3	58.2	64.6
Marijuana	5.3	11.2	20.0
Ecstasy	n/a	3.4	0.0
Methamphetamine	n/a	3.4	0.0
Inhalants	n/a	3.5	5.1
Prescription Drugs without Rx	n/a	8.1	3.4
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	n/a	10.5	13.6

30-day Substance Use

30-day Substance Use: Comparisons with SPIRIT, MO, and US

30-day substance use levels in the Hickman Mills school district are either equal to or less than their SPIRIT, MO, and US counterparts.

Table 6. 30-day Substance Use: Comparison between Hickman Mills, SPIRIT, MO, and US data				
	Hickman Mills[1]	SPIRIT Total[2]	MSS[3]	US[4]
Cigarettes	4.9	6.5	10.1	9.8
Alcohol	11.7	13.7	22.3	15.9
Marijuana	3.7	4.2	6.1	6.7
Inhalants	3.1	3.4	4.6	1.2
Prescription Drugs without Rx	2.5	3.7	n/a	n/a
Other Illegal Drugs	3.7	3.6	n/a	n/a
Binge Drinking (5 or more drinks on same occasion)	3.1	7.6	9.0	n/a
Ride in a car with someone who was drunk	12.4	13.8	20.7	n/a
Drive a car while drunk	2.5	2.3	4.1	n/a

[1]Hickman Mills, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 163 (average age = 13.08)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 805 (average age = 13.00)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 86,861 (average age = 13.64)
[4] National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

30-day Substance Use by Grade Level

The percentage of 30-day substance users is low for most substances regardless of grade level. The frequent use of alcohol seems to occur at the 9th grade with 20% of those surveyed admitting to use within the past month. Inhalants and binge drinking, on the other hand, show a decreased percentage of users from the 6th – 8th grade level to the 9th grade.

Table 7. 30-day Substance Use by Grade Level			
	4th – 5th	6th – 8th	9th
Cigarettes	3.6	3.1	7.7
Alcohol	2.4	6.1	20.0
Marijuana	1.3	2.0	6.2
Inhalants	n/a	8.0	5.1
Prescription Drugs without Rx	n/a	4.6	1.7
Other Illegal Drugs	n/a	10.3	0.0
Binge Drinking (5 or more drinks on same occasion)	n/a	10.3	6.8
Ride in a car with someone who was drunk	n/a	16.1	10.2
Drive a car while drunk	n/a	13.8	10.2

Age of 1st Use

Age of 1st Use: Comparisons with SPIRIT, Missouri, and US

The age of first use of ATODs in Hickman Mills is slightly lower than SPIRIT and Missouri samples for all drugs. The most significant difference occurs among inhalant users with Hickman Mills respondents indicating that they were 9.75 years of age when they began using inhalants and the total SPIRIT sample being 11.18 years of age.

Table 8. Age of 1st Use: Comparison between Hickman Mills, SPIRIT, and MO			
	Hickman Mills[1]	SPIRIT Total[2]	MSS[3]
Cigarettes	10.96	11.22	11.31
Alcohol (more than a sip)	10.44	10.78	11.81
Marijuana	11.48	12.17	12.60
Ecstasy	11.33	12.71	n/a
Methamphetamine	11.00	12.55	n/a
Inhalants	9.75	11.18	n/a
Prescription Drugs without Rx	11.20	12.35	n/a
Alcohol (once or twice a month)	12.47	12.26	n/a

[1]Hickman Mills, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 163 (average age = 13.08)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 805 (average age = 13.00)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 9th grade, n = 86,861 (average age = 13.64)

Other Substance Use Indicators

Extent of Use

Sixth – 12th graders were asked how many cigarettes they smoke per day. Of those who admitted to cigarette use, all of them (100%) indicated they smoked 5 or fewer cigarettes a day.

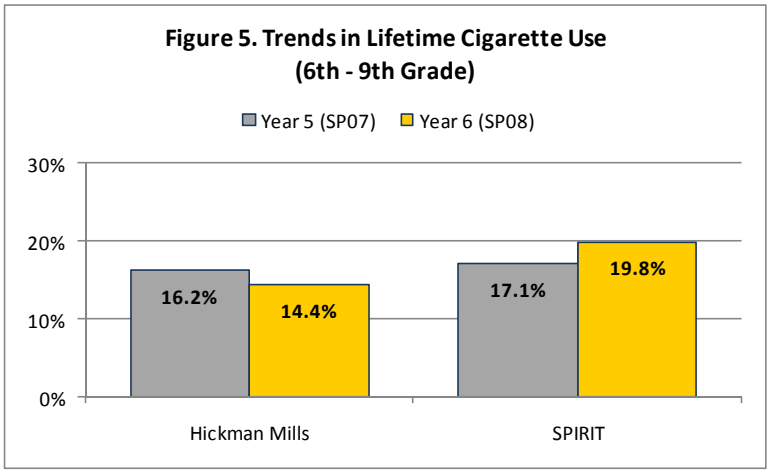
The majority (69.2%) of 6th – 12th grade youth who reported drinking alcohol indicated that they only had one drink a day. Almost 20% reporting drinking two to three drinks a day. Only 11.5% reported drinking 5 or more drinks a day on the days that they drink.

Trends in Substance Use

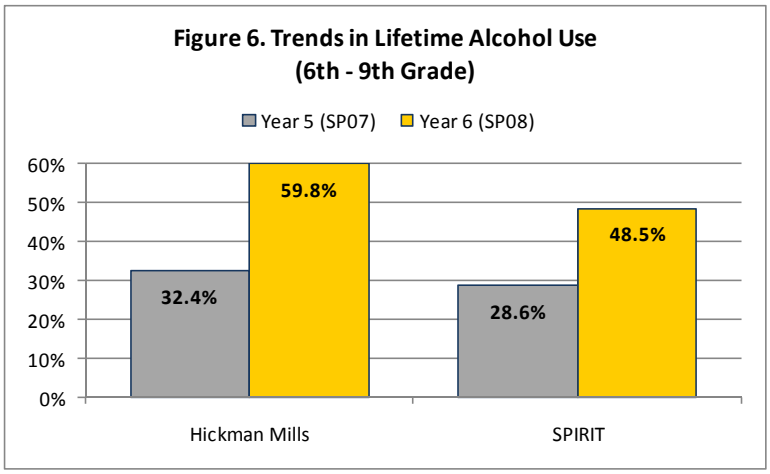
In order to examine the effects of the SPIRIT project over time, youth in the 6th – 9th grades in Year 5 were compared to youth in the 6th – 9th grades in Year 6 in both the Hickman Mills school district and the SPIRIT total sample. This is a modified data set and will not represent numbers already presented in the Year 5 or the general section of the Year 6 report. Comparisons between years should be made with caution as it is natural for fluctuations to occur from year to year.

Lifetime Use

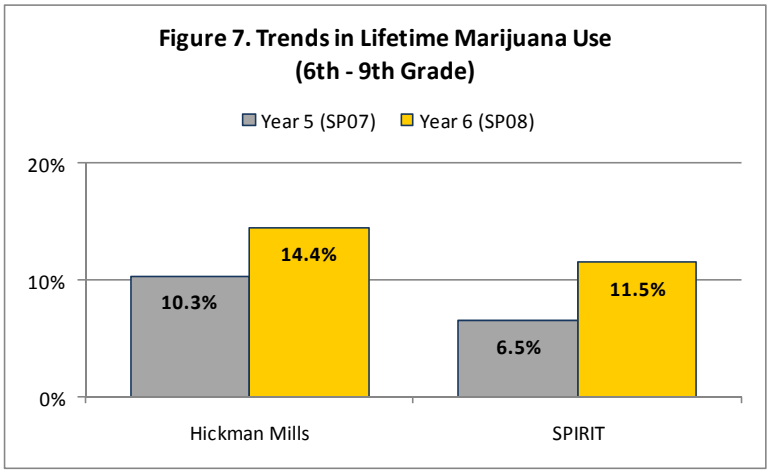
Among 6th – 9th grade youth there was no difference in the percentage of cigarette users between Year 5 and Year 6 in either the Hickman Mills or SPIRIT samples.



The percentage of lifetime alcohol users increased in the Hickman Mills and SPIRIT total samples.

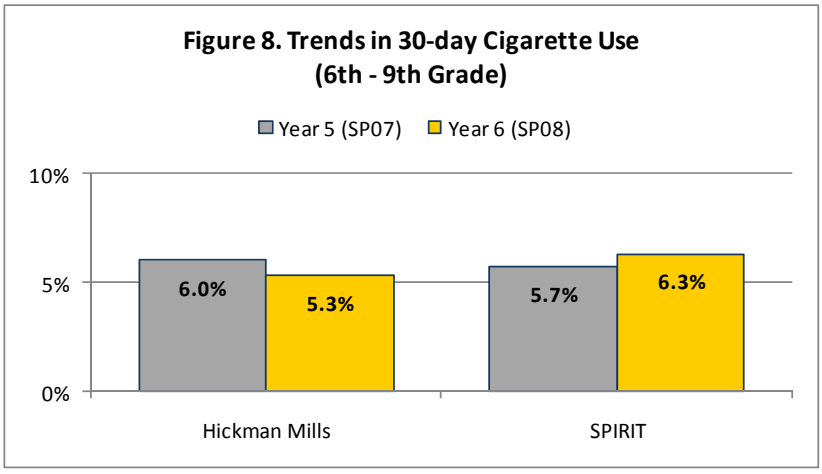


There was a slight increase in the percentage of marijuana users in both Hickman Mills and SPIRIT 6th – 9th grade youth.

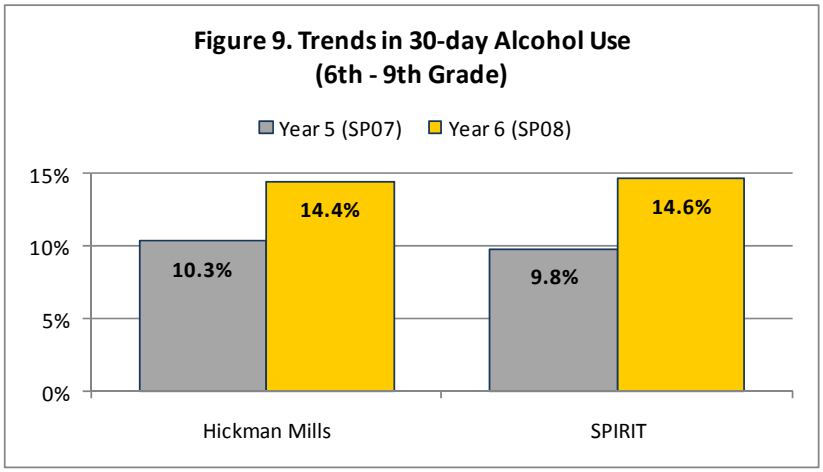


30-day Use

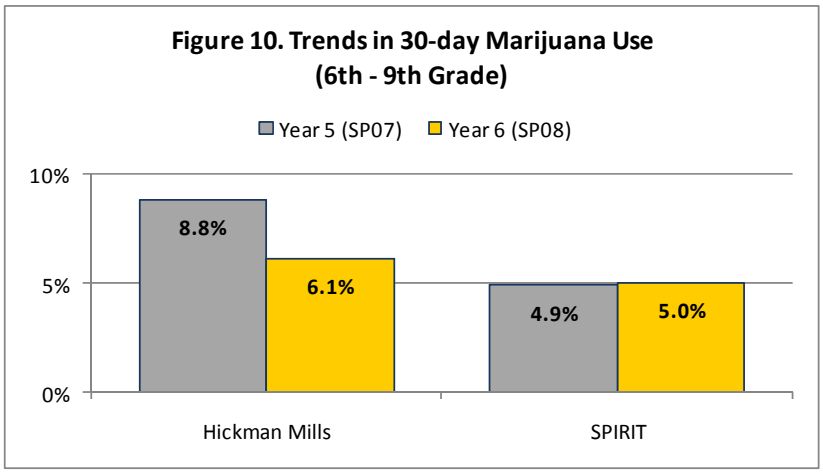
There was no difference in the percentage of cigarette users in the past 30 days in either the Hickman Mills or the SPIRIT sample.



Year 6 had a slightly larger percentage of 30-day alcohol users than Year 5 in both Hickman Mills and SPIRIT as a whole.



There was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 30-day marijuana users among 6th – 9th grade youth in Hickman Mills. However, the total SPIRIT sample showed no difference from year to year.



Summary

The percentage of Hickman Mills students who have ever used cigarettes or inhalants is lower among youth in Hickman Mills than the SPIRIT total sample, and the Missouri and US samples. The percentage of alcohol users, however, is higher.

- 30-day substance use levels are either equal to or less than their SPIRIT, MO, and US counterparts
- The age of first ATOD use is slightly lower than SPIRIT and Missouri samples for all drugs. The most significant difference occurs among inhalant users, with Hickman Mills respondents indicating that they were 9.75 years of age when they began using inhalants and the total SPIRIT sample being 11.18 years of age.
- 30-day alcohol use increased slightly among Hickman Mills students and the SPIRIT sample as a whole.
- Of the sixth – 12th graders who admitted to smoking, all of them (100%) indicated they smoked 5 or fewer cigarettes a day.
- The majority (69.2%) of 6th – 12th grade youth who reported drinking alcohol indicated that they only had one drink a day. Almost 20% reporting drinking two to three drinks a day. Only 11.5% reported drinking 5 or more drinks a day on the days that they drink.
- While the total SPIRIT sample showed no difference from year to year, there was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 30-day marijuana users among 6th – 9th grade youth in Hickman Mills.

Chapter 4: Substance Use Attitudes

The following chapter presents youths' attitudes toward substances and two substance use indicators from the National Outcome Measures (NOMs): (1) perceived risk of harm from substance use; and (2) the perception of disapproving attitudes toward substance use.

Substance Use Attitudes

Youth were more likely to report they might drink when older than smoke cigarettes or marijuana. They were also more likely to believe that most adults drink alcohol than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. However, they also thought teenagers were equally as likely to drink alcohol as to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. On the whole, the majority of youth had more favorable attitudes toward alcohol than cigarettes or marijuana.

Table 9. Youth Attitudes toward Alcohol and Other Drugs in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I might smoke cigarettes when I get older	86.9	10.2	2.0	0.8
Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool	92.1	5.4	1.7	0.8
Kids who smoke cigarettes are more grown-up	85.6	7.4	4.5	2.5
Most teenagers smoke cigarettes	33.9	15.5	33.5	17.1
Most adults smoke cigarettes	29.3	13.8	36.8	20.1
I might drink alcohol when I get older	52.9	16.1	24.8	6.2
Drinking alcohol lets you have more fun	70.4	19.3	8.6	1.6
Most teenagers drink alcohol	29.5	17.0	39.4	14.1
Most adults drink alcohol	22.8	13.7	32.0	31.5
I might smoke marijuana when I get older	87.2	6.6	4.0	2.2
Most teenagers use marijuana	37.1	15.9	34.9	12.1
Most adults use marijuana.	33.3	20.7	27.6	13.4

Substance Use Attitudes by Grade Level

Regardless of grade level, very few youth reported that they were likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana when they were older. Conversely, 18.5% of 4th – 5th graders, 39.6% of 6th – 8th graders, and 33.9% of 9th grade youth indicated that they might drink alcohol when they were older.

Perceptions of the prevalence of drug use among teens and adults varied depending on grade level. The majority of 4th – 5th grade youth thought that most teenagers used cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana and that most adults used cigarettes and alcohol. Sixth through eighth (6th – 8th) grade youth were the least likely to think that most teens and adults used drugs. However, by the 9th grade, a majority of youth again thought that most teens and adults used drugs.

Table 10. Youth Attitudes toward Alcohol and Other Drugs by Grade Level (Somewhat & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
I might smoke cigarettes when I get older	3.7	2.0	3.0
Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool	1.2	2.0	4.7
Kids who smoke cigarettes are more grown-up	11.1	3.1	7.7
Most teenagers smoke cigarettes	67.5	33.0	55.3
Most adults smoke cigarettes	78.5	36.1	61.9
I might drink alcohol when I get older	18.5	39.6	33.9
Drinking alcohol lets you have more fun	6.1	11.4	14.1
Most teenagers drink alcohol	67.9	38.6	57.8
Most adults drink alcohol	73.8	54.6	64.0
I might smoke marijuana when I get older	4.5	4.2	10.9
Most teenagers use marijuana	56.5	30.6	61.5
Most adults use marijuana.	49.4	29.6	47.6

Perceived Risk of Harm from Substance Use

Alcohol was the drug considered to pose the least risk by the greatest percentage of students, followed by cigarettes and marijuana.

Table 11. Youth Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Alcohol and Other Drugs in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	No Risk	Slight Risk	Moderate Risk	Great Risk
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	20.6	18.9	30.0	30.5
Drink any type of alcohol	18.5	21.4	34.2	25.9
Use marijuana	20.8	7.8	24.7	46.8
Use ecstasy occasionally†	10.5	6.8	14.8	67.9
Use meth occasionally†	9.4	5.0	13.8	71.9
Use inhalants†	9.9	3.7	14.2	72.1
Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended†	9.9	4.3	15.5	70.2

† (6th - 9th only)

Risk of Harm by Grade Level

A majority of youth in 4th – 5th grades *did not* think cigarettes or alcohol posed a moderate or great risk of harm. The percentage of students who considered drugs harmful increased in the 6th – 8th and 9th grade levels.

Table 12. Youth Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Alcohol and Other Drugs by Grade Level (Moderate Risk & Great Risk combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	44.4	70.1	66.1
Drink any type of alcohol	45.7	69.4	64.1
Use marijuana	60.9	77.3	73.8
Use ecstasy occasionally†	n/a	84.6	79.7
Use meth occasionally†	n/a	87.5	82.9
Use inhalants†	n/a	86.7	86.0
Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended†	n/a	86.8	84.1

† (6th - 9th only)

Perception of Disapproving Attitudes toward Substance Use

The majority of youth reported they thought the use of any drug was either wrong or very wrong. They perceived the use of alcohol and cigarettes to be the least wrong of all the drugs.

Table 13. Youth Perception of Wrongfulness of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	Not Wrong at All	A Little Bit Wrong	Wrong	Very Wrong
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	8.2	17.3	28.4	46.1
Drink any type of alcohol	9.5	28.1	22.7	39.7
Use marijuana	5.6	7.8	18.1	68.5
Use ecstasy occasionally†	1.2	5.5	9.2	84.0
Use meth occasionally†	2.5	1.8	9.8	85.9
Use inhalants†	1.9	3.7	9.3	85.2
Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended†	2.5	3.7	13.0	80.9

† (6th - 9th only)

Disapproving Attitudes by Grade Level

Perceptions of wrongfulness decreased as grade level increased for alcohol and cigarettes. In other words, students in higher grade levels thought it was less wrong than students in lower grade levels to use cigarettes and marijuana.

Table 14. Youth Perception of Wrongfulness of Alcohol and Other Drugs by Grade Level (Wrong & Very Wrong combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
Smoke part or all of a cigarette	79.0	77.6	64.1
Drink any type of alcohol	72.5	61.2	51.6
Use marijuana	85.5	89.8	83.1
Use ecstasy occasionally†	n/a	93.9	92.3
Use meth occasionally†	n/a	95.9	95.4
Use inhalants†	n/a	95.9	92.2
Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended†	n/a	96.9	89.1

† (6th - 9th only)

Summary

- On the whole, the majority of youth had more favorable attitudes toward alcohol than cigarettes or marijuana. They were more likely to report they might drink when older than smoke cigarettes or marijuana. They were also more likely to believe that most adults drink alcohol than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. They also thought teenagers were equally as likely to drink alcohol as to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.

- Sixth through eighth (6th – 8th) graders were least likely to think that most teens and adults used drugs.

- Alcohol was considered to pose the least risk by the greatest percentage of students, followed by cigarettes and marijuana.

Chapter 5: Aggression & Problem Behavior

The following chapter contains teacher observations of Kindergarten through third grade children's displays of aggression, provided through a teacher observation checklist. Self report of participation in problem behavior by 4th – 9th graders is also described.

Aggression

While a small percentage of children were identified as being prone to aggression, teachers reported that more children were prone to aggress reactively than proactively.

Table 15. Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade)

	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Usually True	Almost Always True
Reactive Aggression					
When this child has been teased or threatened, he or she gets angry easily and strikes back.	20.0	25.7	35.7	15.7	2.9
This child always claims that other children are to blame in a fight and feels that they started the trouble.	26.1	26.1	24.6	20.3	2.9
When a peer accidentally hurts the child (such as bumping into him or her), this child assumes that the peer meant to do it, and then overreacts with anger/fighting.	37.7	21.7	23.2	14.5	2.9
Proactive Aggression					
This child gets other kids to gang up on a peer that he or she does not like.	53.6	21.7	20.3	2.9	1.4
This child uses physical force (or threatens to use force) in order to dominate other kids.	53.6	24.6	15.9	5.8	0.0
This child threatens or bullies others in order to get his or her own way.	45.7	25.7	22.9	4.3	1.4

Problem Behavior

The behaviors that youth were most likely to have participated in the past 3 months were making fun of other people or being made fun of. The behaviors that were least likely to have occurred were being drunk or high at school, or being threatened or threatening another with a weapon with over 90% of youth reported that these behaviors had "never" occurred in the past 3 months.

Table 16. Problem Behavior in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)								
	Never	1 or 2 times	3 to 5 times	6 to 9 times	10 to 19 times	20 to 29 times	30 to 39 times	40 or more times
Hit or pushed other kids at school	48.6	26.9	11.4	5.3	3.3	1.2	1.2	2.0
Spread mean rumors about other kids	66.8	21.3	5.3	3.3	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.6
Made fun of other people	32.7	31.4	15.5	5.3	5.7	2.4	1.2	5.7
Been in a physical fight	71.4	19.6	2.0	2.0	1.6	0.4	1.2	1.6
Been suspended from school	73.8	19.3	3.7	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.4	1.2
Been in in-school suspension or detention	54.3	32.7	9.0	1.2	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.4
Been harassed or bullied	63.0	20.6	4.9	2.1	4.1	1.2	0.4	3.7
Been afraid of being beaten up	83.8	7.9	2.1	0.4	1.7	0.8	0.4	2.9
Had mean rumors or lies spread about you	46.5	28.0	11.9	5.3	3.3	0.8	0.4	3.7
Been made fun of	36.8	34.3	9.9	5.4	3.7	2.1	2.1	5.8
Been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked	63.5	19.9	7.9	4.1	1.2	0.4	1.2	1.7
Been drunk or high at school†	95.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Been threatened or injured with weapons†	94.4	2.5	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.6	0.0	0.0
Used any weapon to threaten or bully someone†	95.7	2.5	1.2	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Seen someone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon†	77.6	14.3	5.0	1.9	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6

† (6th – 9th only)

Problem Behavior by Grade Level

A greater percentage of youth in the 4th – 5th grades reported experiencing or participating in most problem behaviors than other grade levels. Making fun of other people and being made fun of however were almost as equally likely regardless of grade level, with a slight decrease in the 6th – 8th grades. As grade level increased, disciplinary incidents, in the form of in-school and out-of-school suspension and detentions increased.

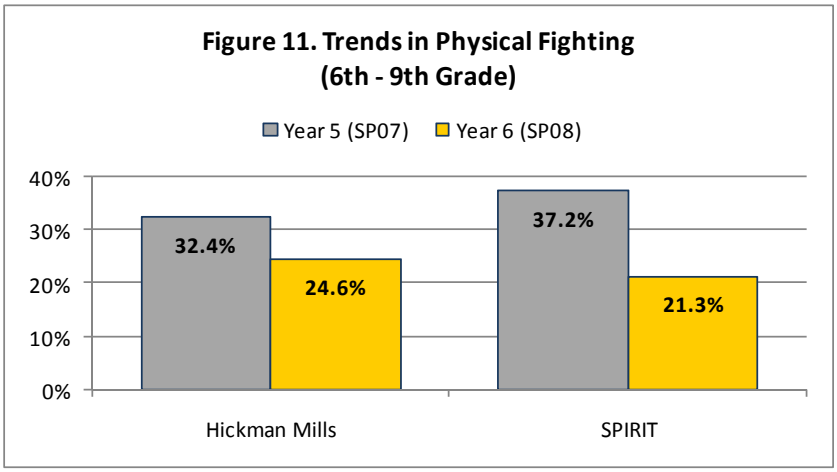
Table 17. Problem Behavior by Grade Level (4th – 9th Grade; 1 or more times)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
Hit or pushed other kids at school	59.0	49.5	44.6
Spread mean rumors about other kids	43.4	34.4	18.5
Made fun of other people	67.5	64.9	70.8
Been in a physical fight	37.3	28.9	16.9
Been suspended from school	15.7	30.9	32.8
Been in in-school suspension or detention	26.5	52.6	60.0
Been harassed or bullied	57.3	32.0	18.8
Been afraid of being beaten up	21.0	16.7	9.4
Had mean rumors or lies spread about you	69.5	47.4	42.2
Been made fun of	72.8	54.6	64.1
Been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked	44.6	39.2	21.3
Been drunk or high at school†	n/a	3.1	7.8
Been threatened or injured with weapons†	n/a	6.2	4.7
Used any weapon to threaten or bully someone†	n/a	4.1	4.6
Seen someone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon†	n/a	14.6	33.8

† (6th – 9th only)

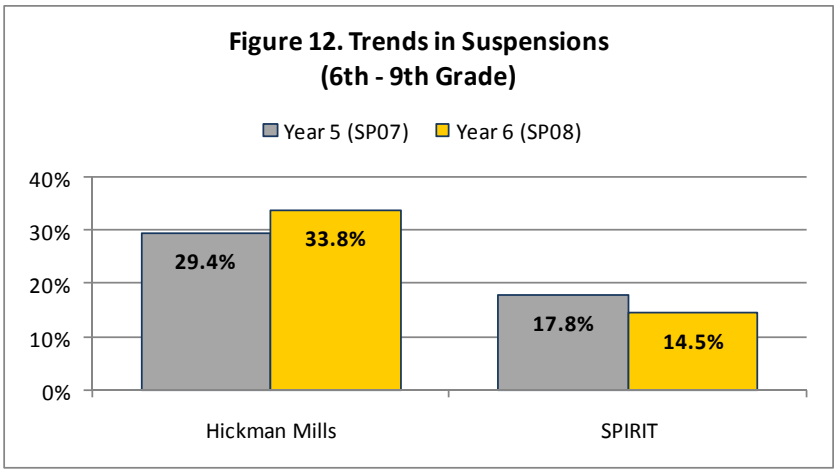
Trends in Problem Behavior

The first goal of the SPIRIT project is to reduce violent/aggressive behaviors. Three of these types of behaviors are physical fighting, being the victim of physical aggression (having been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked by another), and suspensions (self-report). The following presents a comparison of Year 5 and Year 6 of the SPIRIT project on these three behaviors. This is a modified data set and will not represent numbers already presented in the Year 5 or the general section of the Year 6 report. Comparisons between years should be made with caution as it is natural for fluctuations to occur from year to year.

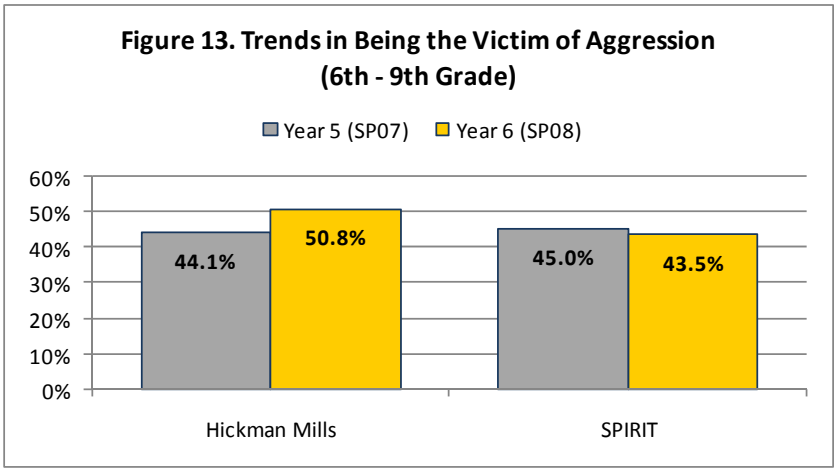
From Year 5 to Year 6, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who had been in a physical fight in the 3 months previous to the survey in both the Hickman Mills and SPIRIT total samples.



From Year 5 to Year 6, the percentage of youth who reported they received a suspension in the past 3 months did not vary in either the Hickman Mills or SPIRIT samples.



The percentage of youth who reported being the victim of physical aggression was slightly higher in Year 6 than in Year 5 in Hickman Mills. The percentage of youth who were the victims of physical aggression did not vary from Year 5 to Year 6 among the SPIRIT total sample.



Summary

- Youth reported more frequently making fun of other people or being made fun of in the past three months. The behaviors that were least likely to have occurred were being drunk or high at school, or being threatened or threatening another with a weapon. The vast majority of youth (over 90%) reported these behaviors had "never" occurred in the past 3 months.

- A greater percentage of youth in the 4th – 5th grades reported experiencing or participating in most problem behaviors than other grade levels. Making fun of other people and being made fun of however were almost as equally likely regardless of grade level. As grade level increased, disciplinary incidents, in the form of in-school and out-of-school suspension and detentions increased.

- From Year 5 to Year 6, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who had been in a physical fight in the 3 months previous to the survey in both the Hickman Mills and SPIRIT total samples.

- The percentage of youth who reported being the victim of physical aggression was slightly higher in Year 6 than in Year 5 in Hickman Mills. The percentage of youth who were the victims of physical aggression did not vary from Year 5 to Year 6 among the SPIRIT total sample.

Chapter 6: School Performance

Each participating school district was asked to provide school performance data for all consented youth. The following chapter presents information on absences, disciplinary incidents, suspensions, and grade point averages (GPA) for those youth who were chosen for the evaluation. Unlike other district reports, data is only available for 8th and 9th grade students in the Hickman Mills School District.

Grade Point Average

Evaluated youth from Smith-Hale Middle and Ruskin High School (8th – 9th grade; n = 88) had an average GPA of 2.65 at the end of Fall 2007 semester. At the end of Spring 2008 semester, those same youth had an average GPA of 2.51. The cumulative GPA for the entire 2007-2008 school year ranged from 0.42 to 4.00. The average cumulative GPA was 2.49.

Table 18. Average GPA (8th – 9th Grade)

	Male	Female
Fall 2007	2.45	2.84
Spring 2008	2.24	2.76
Cumulative GPA	2.22	2.75

Absences

The district was asked to provide the number of unexcused absences each consented student had accumulated over the course of the 2007-2008 school year. Data available to evaluators, however, included the number of both unexcused and excused absences, by hour. Most participants (97.6%) had at least one hour of absence. Over 50 percent of the youth had missed ten or more hours.

Disciplinary Incidents

Disciplinary Incidents were recorded in two forms: any disciplinary incident and disciplinary incidents related to alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. The majority of youth (85.2%) received at least one disciplinary incident over the course of the school year. However, only 15.9% received was involved in ten or more incidents. In addition, only one youth's disciplinary incident was recorded as ATOD related. Due to differences in disciplinary policies, caution should be used when comparing across SPIRIT sites.

Suspensions

Both in-school and out-of-school suspensions were recorded. Over 34% of the evaluated 8th and 9th graders received an in-school suspension; 28.9% received an out-of-school suspension. Due to differences in disciplinary policies, caution should be used when comparing across SPIRIT sites.

Summary

- GPA went down slightly from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008.
- While the majority of youth (85.2%) received at least one disciplinary incident during the school year, a small percentage (15.9%) was involved in 10 or more incidents.
- About 1/3 of evaluated 8th and 9th grade youth received an in-school suspension and 28.9 had an out-of-school suspension.

Chapter 7: Program Effectiveness

Children and youth in the 2nd through 9th grades were asked to report their perceptions of their particular prevention program's effectiveness. Students, on the whole, were satisfied and felt the programs were effective.

The greatest percentage of youth thought the program was effective in bolstering their resistance skills. The lowest percentage of youth thought the program was effective in improving peer relations, i.e. helping them get along better with others and helping others to be nicer to them.

Table 19. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)

	No, not at all	No, not much	Yes, a little	Yes, a lot
Did you like the program?	9.7	8.1	42.5	39.7
Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry?	9.7	19.0	34.7	36.7
Do you act better because of the program?	12.6	17.5	43.9	26.0
Did the program help you feel better about yourself?	12.6	15.8	38.1	33.6
Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do?	9.6	13.3	30.1	47.0
Has the program helped you to get along better with other people?	10.0	24.4	37.6	28.0
Are other kids nicer to you because of the program?	29.4	20.6	28.6	21.4
Was the time spent on the program helpful?	8.1	14.2	39.7	38.1

Program Effectiveness by Grade Level

Satisfaction with program was highest among 2nd and 3rd grade youth, followed by 6th – 8th grade youth. The lowest percentage of student satisfaction was in the 4th – 5th grades and the 9th grade. However, a greater percentage of 4th – 5th graders thought the program was effective in helping them improve their behavior and self-esteem than 9th graders.

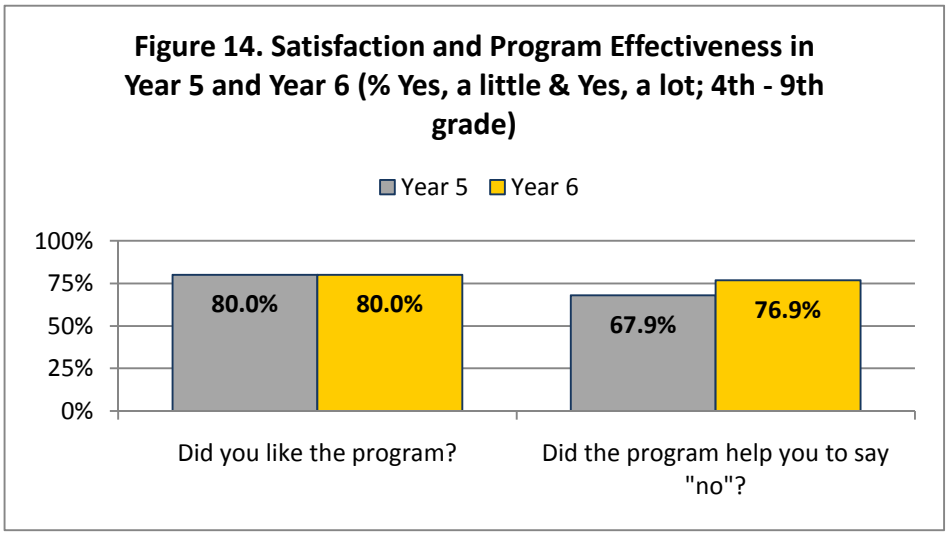
Table 20. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT in Year 6 by Grade Level (Yes, a lot & Yes, a little combined Percentages)

	2nd – 3rd	4th – 5th	6th – 8th	9th
Did you like the program?	90.7	76.8	89.0	78.5
Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry?	92.5	73.5	84.0	79.3
Do you act better because of the program?	97.6	69.5	84.9	47.7
Did the program help you feel better about yourself?	90.7	66.3	90.9	49.2
Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do?	85.7	72.6	89.0	64.6
Has the program helped you to get along better with other people?	87.8	55.3	85.0	49.3
Are other kids nicer to you because of the program?	61.9	34.5	76.0	29.7
Was the time spent on the program helpful?	93.2	71.0	89.0	68.8

Program Effectiveness Over Time

For this analysis, all youth were included who were consented in both Year 5 and Year 6 and for which program effectiveness data was available for both school years (n = 77; 4th – 9th Grade).

There was no change from Year 5 to Year 6 in whether or not youth liked the program or thought it helped with their resistance skills.



Summary

- The greatest percentage of youth thought the program was effective in bolstering their resistance skills. The lowest percentage thought the program was effective in improving peer relations, i.e. helping them get along better with others and helping others to be nicer to them.

- Program satisfaction was highest among 2nd and 3rd graders, followed by 6th – 8th grade youth.

- There were no differences in program satisfaction from Year 5 to Year 6. A higher percentage in Year 6 felt that the program helped them to say “no”.

Chapter 8: Protective Factors

The following chapter presents information on other factors that influence the presentation of aggression and ATOD use in youth. Information presented on Kdg-3rd grade children were provided through a teacher observation checklist.

Social Competence: Change over the course of Year 6

Only one student in the entire Kdg. – 3rd grade sample was rated as a little worse from the beginning to the end of the year. The remaining participants either maintained or improved their social competence. The area which showed the greatest percentage of improvement was in self-esteem and being able to verbally label emotions.

Table 21. Social Competence Change from the beginning to the end of Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade)

	Much worse	Somewhat worse	A little worse	Not at all	A little improved	Somewhat improved	Much improved
Ability to stop and calm down when excited or upset.	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	27.5	24.6	40.6
Ability to verbally label emotions of self and others.	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	20.6	25.0	48.5
Ability to show empathy and compassion for others' feelings.	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	20.3	27.5	43.5
Ability to handle disagreements with others in a positive way.	0.0	0.0	1.4	10.1	15.9	31.9	40.6
Ability to initiate interactions and join in play with others in an appropriate manner.	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	17.4	27.5	47.8
Ability to provide help, share materials, and act cooperatively with others.	0.0	0.0	1.4	8.7	14.5	27.5	47.8
Ability to take turns, play fair, and follow the rules of the game.	0.0	0.0	1.4	8.7	20.3	24.6	44.9
Self-esteem.	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	15.9	31.9	46.4

Social Competence: Prosocial Behavior & Emotion Regulation

Prosocial Behavior. Teachers indicated that over 70% of their students were able to be helpful and act friendly toward others either "well" or "very well. Conversely, over 30% of the children were identified as being able to perform the following prosocial behaviors either "not at all" or only "a little": resolved peer problems on their own, were good at understanding people's feelings, were aware of the effect of their behavior on others, and listened to others' points of view.

Emotion Regulation. Children were best at accepting legitimately imposed limits, with 59.4% being identified as being able to do this "well" or "very well." According to teachers, many children (39.1%) were able to think before acting either "not at all" or only "a little."

Table 22. Social Competence in Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade)					
	Not at all	A little	Moderately well	Well	Very well
Prosocial Behavior					
Expressed needs and feelings appropriately.	8.7	17.4	20.3	17.4	36.2
Resolves peer problems on his/her own.	7.2	26.1	18.8	14.5	33.3
Is very good at understanding other people's feelings.	11.6	20.3	20.3	20.3	27.5
Is aware of the effect of his/her behavior on others.	10.1	26.1	15.9	20.3	27.5
Works well in a group.	4.3	17.4	21.7	17.4	39.1
Shares materials with others.	0.0	15.9	23.3	15.9	44.9
Cooperates with peers without prompting.	0.0	20.6	20.6	16.2	42.6
Is helpful to others.	2.9	14.7	11.8	23.5	47.1
Listens to others' points of view.	7.2	24.6	15.9	24.6	27.5
Can give suggestions and opinions without being bossy.	8.8	20.6	16.2	20.6	33.8
Acts friendly towards others.	0.0	10.4	16.4	23.9	49.3
Emotion Regulation					
Can accept things not going his/her way.	2.9	31.9	13.0	17.4	34.8
Copes well with failure.	0.0	30.4	15.9	27.5	26.1
Accepts legitimate imposed limits.	2.9	15.9	21.7	18.8	40.6
Thinks before acting.	17.4	21.7	21.7	18.8	20.3
Can calm down when excited or all wound up.	5.8	26.1	20.3	21.7	26.1
Can wait in line patiently when necessary.	11.6	23.2	10.1	21.7	33.3
Plays by the rules of the game.	0.0	20.3	24.6	15.9	39.1
Controls temper when there is a disagreement.	5.8	27.5	24.6	15.9	26.1

Empathy

The majority of youth (over 70%) in grades 4-9 were empathic in the areas measured.

Table 23. Youth Capacity for Empathy in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It makes me sad if I see someone who is left out.	7.5	20.6	54.8	17.1
I get upset when I see an animal being hurt.	8.0	20.3	35.1	36.7
I feel bad when someone else gets their feelings hurt.	6.0	19.7	55.0	19.3

Empathy by Grade Level

As grade level increased, a smaller percentage of youth were empathic. The largest decrease in empathy occurred among those getting upset when witnessing an animal being hurt with 77.4% in the 4th – 5th grade and 30.3% in the 9th – 12th grade reporting this behavior.

Table 24. Youth Capacity for Empathy by Grade Level (Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
It makes me sad if I see someone who is left out.	75.0	73.7	65.2
I get upset when I see an animal being hurt.	77.4	74.7	60.3
I feel bad when someone else gets their feelings hurt.	79.7	71.4	71.7

Decision Making

The majority of youth reported that they had good decision making skills in all areas. In fact, 76.7% of youth reported that they were good at making decisions either "often" or "all the time."

Table 25. Youth Decision Making Skills in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	Never	Sometimes but not Often	Often	All the Time
How often do you stop to think about your choices before you make a decision?	4.0	36.9	47.2	11.9
How often do you stop to think about how your decisions may affect others' feelings?	5.2	37.6	41.6	15.6
How often do you stop to think about all of the things that may happen as a result of your decisions?	4.8	35.1	42.2	17.9
How often do you make good decisions?	0.8	22.5	58.2	18.5

Decision Making by Grade Level

Regardless of grade level, most youth thought they accomplished making good decisions either often or all of the time. An interesting pattern emerged in all areas of decision making however, with perception of decision making skills increasing in 6th – 8th grade, and then decreasing in the 9th grade to pre 4th – 5th grade levels.

Table 26. Youth Decision Making Skills by Grade Level (Often & All the Time combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
How often do you stop to think about your choices before you make a decision?	58.8	68.4	46.3
How often do you stop to think about how your decisions may affect others' feelings?	58.3	66.3	42.6
How often do you stop to think about all of the things that may happen as a result of your decisions?	60.7	68.4	47.8
How often do you make good decisions?	72.6	81.5	75.0

Caring Adults

While the majority of youth reported having caring adults at both home and school, more youth reported having caring adults at home than at school. Youth were more likely to indicate teachers will listen to them than they were to report they would go to a teacher if something was bothering them.

Table 27. Youth Perception of Caring Adults in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
At school, there is a teacher or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me.	10.4	15.0	42.6	32.0
At school, there is a teacher or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	6.7	13.4	52.3	27.6
At home, there is a parent or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me.	4.0	6.1	32.9	57.1
At home, there is a parent or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	4.0	6.2	34.8	55.0

Caring Adults by Grade Level

The percentage of youth reporting they believed there were caring adults dropped most significantly between the 6th – 8th and 9th grade levels. Interestingly, youths' perception of caring adults at home decreased in the 6th – 8th grade, but increased slightly in the 9th grade.

Table 28. Youth Perception of Caring Adults by Grade Level (Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th Grade
At school, there is a teacher or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me.	82.1	80.0	68.1
At school, there is a teacher or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	85.6	82.8	71.0
At home, there is a parent or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me.	92.9	79.8	85.5
At home, there is a parent or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	86.9	81.0	84.0

School Attitudes

The majority of youth reported positive attitudes toward school in every area. More youth reported feeling safe going to and from school (82.5%) than at school (68.7%).

Table 29. Youth Attitudes toward School in Year 6 (4th – 9th Grade)				
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel close to people at this school.	7.5	13.4	58.3	20.9
I am happy to be at this school.	11.9	18.6	49.0	20.6
I feel like I am a part of this school.	11.6	14.1	47.4	26.9
The teachers at this school treat students fairly.	17.8	21.9	40.1	20.2
I feel safe at this school.	10.8	20.5	45.4	23.3
I feel safe going to and from school.	6.4	11.2	45.0	37.5

School Attitudes by Grade Level

The percentage of 9th graders reporting positive school attitudes was less than in any other grade level. In the 9th grade only 48.5% reported feeling safe at school and thinking teachers treated students fairly and only 47.8% of 9th graders reported being happy at school.

Table 30. Youth Attitudes toward School by Grade Level (Somewhat Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)			
	4th – 5th Grade	6th – 8th Grade	9th – 12th Grade
I feel close to people at this school.	75.3	87.0	72.4
I am happy to be at this school.	72.7	82.0	47.8
I feel like I am a part of this school.	76.8	82.0	59.7
The teachers at this school treat students fairly.	65.4	64.2	48.5
I feel safe at this school.	80.4	72.8	48.5
I feel safe going to and from school.	86.9	83.6	75.4

Summary

- Only one student in the entire Kdg. – 3rd grade sample was rated as a little worse from the beginning to the end of the year. All others either maintained or improved their social competence. The area which showed the greatest percentage of improvement was in self-esteem and being able to verbally label emotions.

- As grade level increased, a smaller percentage of youth were empathetic. The largest decrease in empathy occurred among those getting upset when witnessing an animal being hurt with 77.4% in the 4th – 5th grade and 30.3% in the 9th – 12th grade reporting this behavior.

- The majority of youth reported that they had good decision making skills in all areas. In fact, 76.7% of youth reported that they were good at making decisions either “often” or “all the time.”

- The majority of youth reported having caring adults at both home and school. However, more youth reporting having caring adults at home than at school. The percentage of youth reporting they believed there were caring adults dropped most significantly between the 6th – 8th and 9th grade levels.

- While the majority of youth reported positive attitudes toward school in every area, a much higher percentage of youth reported feeling safe going to and from school (82.5%) than at school (68.7%). In the 9th grade, only 48.5% reported feeling safe at school and thinking teachers treated students fairly and only 47.8% of 9th graders reported being happy at school.

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