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The Impact of Drug Abuse Resistance Education in Portsmouth, Virginia from 1987-1994

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**THE IMPACT OF DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION IN
PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA, FROM 1987-1994**

A Study Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of
Occupational and Technical Studies
Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

By
Darrell M. Lassiter

August 1995

Signature Page

This research paper was prepared by Darrell M. Lassiter under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Education degree.

Approved by:

John M. Ritz 9-5-95
Dr. John M. Ritz, Date

Advisor, Chair and Graduate Program Director

Occupational and Technical Studies

Old Dominion University

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Darrell M. Lassiter

Table of Contents

	Page
Signature Page.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	ii
Table of Figures.....	v
Chapter I	
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Goals.....	2
Background and Significance.....	3
Limitations.....	4
Assumptions.....	5
Procedures.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Overview and Summary.....	6
Chapter II	
<i>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</i>	8
History and Development of DARE.....	9
The Value of DARE Examined.....	11
Is DARE Worth Its Price.....	12
Summary.....	13
Chapter III	
<i>METHODS AND PROCEDURES</i>	14
Population.....	14
Instrument Design.....	14
Data Collection.....	15
Statistical Analysis.....	15
Summary.....	16

Chapter IV	
<i>FINDINGS</i>	17
Local Enrollment.....	17
Juvenile Arrests for Substance Abuse Related Crimes.....	19
Juvenile Arrest vs Adult Arrest Statistics.....	20
Summary.....	21
 Chapter V	
<i>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND</i>	
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	
Summary.....	22
Conclusions.....	24
Recommendations.....	26
 Bibliography	28
 Appendices	
A. Juvenile Arrest Statistics from the Uniform Crime Report.....	31
B. Student Enrollment Forms for Portsmouth Public Schools	33

Table of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1: Students enrolled in D.A.R.E.....	18
Figure 2: Juvenile Arrests for Substance Abuse Crimes.....	19
Figure 3: Arrest Trends.....	20

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Unfortunately, the increase of juvenile arrests associated with substance abuse has reflected a societal decline that has decayed the once perceived innocence of youth. Finding a solution to this increasing problem must rest on the shoulders of the communities in which the proliferation of the illegal substance abuse is occurring.

As part of the community, the local school system, as well as law enforcement, must now assume responsibilities once carried out by the family unit. Values such as self-worth, community pride and respect for the laws of the land must be instilled by sources outside the home as the traditional family unit can no longer be relied upon as the commonly accepted teacher of these values.

Since 1983, great efforts have been made by law enforcement officials and educators in school systems nationwide to stem the rising tide of substance abuse among the youth of America through a program called Drug Abuse Resistance Education. This research study attempts to determine if

there is a correlation between the exposure of students to the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program and the fluctuation in the juvenile arrests associated with substance abuse related crimes in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if there is an identifiable impact being made on the juvenile arrest rate for substance abuse related crimes among elementary age students in Portsmouth Public Schools that have been exposed to the Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program.

Research Goals

The goals of this study were to:

1. Identify the number of elementary age students in the fifth grade in Portsmouth, Virginia, that are receiving Drug Abuse Resistance Education training.
2. Determine the amount of funds being invested by the City of Portsmouth to reduce substance abuse by adolescents and the effectiveness of the current program.

3. Identify any positive change in the juvenile substance abuse related arrests made in Portsmouth, Virginia, during the years 1987-1994.

Background and Significance

Substance abuse has become a social problem of epidemic proportion among the youth of today. Newspapers remind us daily of the increase of drug use among juveniles and the resulting crimes that naturally accompany the use and abuse of illegal drugs. As the drug culture grows, Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is being examined as to its effectiveness in training elementary age students to adopt attitudes consistent with a "Just say no!" philosophy. D.A.R.E. is designed to educate young students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and also instruct them in techniques to resist peer pressure, conflict management, anger management and other violence-avoidance strategies. Recent studies have drawn into question the cost-effective nature of the program in relation to the results achieved. A survey of the current literature reveals a marked increase in the D.A.R.E. program as more and more communities look for ways to combat the spread of illegal drug use. A 1990 study by the Evaluation and Training Institute revealed that D.A.R.E contributed to better study habits as well as

resistance to drugs. A more recent study by the Research Triangle Institute has called into question the effectiveness of the D.A.R.E. program as compared to other methods of training.

The significance of this study is that by statistically analyzing the juvenile arrest rate for substance abuse related crimes, when compared to the number of students exposed to the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program, an identification of the effectiveness of the program can be made and future efforts to expand or modify the program can be made to meet any current deficiencies. For example, if it were shown that the arrest rate for fifth grade students were substantially affected, considerations may be entertained for implementing the program at earlier grade levels.

Limitations

This research study was limited to fifth grade students in the Portsmouth Public School system that participated in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program which is represented by the Student Enrollment Reports. The study also was further limited by the arrest reports for juveniles in the corresponding age group as reported by the Department of Justice's Uniform Crime Report for Portsmouth, Virginia.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the study:

1. The Portsmouth Public School Enrollment Reports which reflect the number of fifth grade students in the Portsmouth Public School System were complete and accurate.
2. Substance abuse was a problem that was on the increase among the youth of America.
3. The Juvenile Arrest report from the Uniform Crime Report was accurate and complete.
4. There was no significant difference between the fifth grade students in the ten public elementary schools in Portsmouth, Virginia, and other similarly situated students across the United States.

Procedures

The enrollment reports from the Portsmouth Public Schools were reviewed to ascertain the number of elementary students in the fifth grade that were exposed to the D.A.R.E program. This data was then compared to the juvenile arrest report for the same years. A connection between the D.A.R.E. Program and juvenile arrest rate for substance abuse was shown.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were provided for the reader to have a better understanding of the study.

Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)	A program designed to teach children to avoid drugs.
Evaluation Training Institute	Los Angeles-based independent research firm.
Controlled substance	Narcotic that is regulated by law.
Substance Abuse	Use of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs that cause the impairment of normal mental or physical functions.

Overview and Summary

In Chapter I, the reader was introduced to the perceived problems facing elementary school students, including a daily assault by the drug

culture. Drug Awareness Resistance Education attempted to offer a means of defense to this assault. The reader has been introduced to the problem of the study and its goals, limitations and assumptions within the framework of this research paper.

Chapter II reviews the current reports on the perceived impact of the D.A.R.E. program at the fifth grade level and the economics of the program. Chapter III pinpoints the methods and procedures used for this study and Chapter IV reports the findings of the study. In conclusion, Chapter V provides a summary of the research and includes recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The goal of this research study was to examine the effectiveness of the D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) program at the local level. In order to effectively evaluate the program, information was gathered from multiple sources to ensure the completeness of the data that was later presented in this document.

The Review of Literature in Chapter II has been divided into three categories. The first section surveys the history and development of the D.A.R.E. Program at both the local and national levels. The second section deals with the current and apparently conflicting studies that have brought the D.A.R.E. program under close scrutiny, including the study by the Evaluation and Testing Institute and the more recent study conducted by the Research Triangle Institute which has cast doubtful shadows on the effectiveness of the D.A.R.E. program. The third and final section deals with the social and political factors currently influencing the D.A.R.E. program including the funding sources for the program.

History and Development of the D.A.R.E. Program

During the last thirty years the proliferation of drugs into mainstream America has reached mind-boggling proportions. In the sixties and early seventies the drug culture thrived as the "hippee" generation of America embraced the abuse of mind-altering controlled substances. The effects of the growing acceptance of illegal drug-use was the growing profitability of illegal drug-dealing. This growing acceptance and profitability fueled the expansion of the drug-dealer's market to include not only the adults, but the elementary-aged youth as well. As drug related problems began to plague society, ways to combat the evils of drug abuse were sought.

In response to the explosion of the abuse of drugs by adolescents, the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Los Angeles Police Department, under the direction of then Chief of Police Daryl Gates, in 1983, formed a unique partnership which we know today as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. The program which is geared to fifth and sixth graders was heralded as an answer to early education and intervention to stem the rising tide of drug abuse. The program was taught over a 17-week period and was designed to help students learn about illegal drugs and deal with the peer pressure often associated with a student's first experience with

drugs. During the inaugural school year, 1983-1984, 5,500 students graduated from the D.A.R.E. program (PR Newswire, May 3, 1994). In 1984, D.A.R.E. America was established as a non-profit organization, and within months, school districts and agencies throughout the country began requesting information about the D.A.R.E. curriculum. By 1987 the number of D.A.R.E. graduates nationwide had reached 1.5 million (PR Newswire, May 3, 1994). In 1988, Kentucky Fried Chicken became the program's first national sponsor. Celebrities that have lent their name in support of the program have included such greats as: Arsenio Hall, Marcus Allen, James Worthy, and Florence Griffith Joyner to name a few (PR Newswire, May 3, 1994). Also in 1988, the program got a huge boost by getting a national endorsement by President George Bush. In 1989, the First National D.A.R.E. day was held in Washington, D.C., and by 1990 over 20 million students in grades kindergarten through 12th were impacted that year (Business Wire, September 30, 1994).

D.A.R.E activities include a local "D.A.R.E. DAY" which has received national attention for its program. Also the program now reaches several thousand students in kindergarten through grade twelve and includes instruction in conflict resolution and anger management.

The Value of D.A.R.E. Examined

Evaluation of any program is paramount to its continued existence and is a necessary step in the efforts to measure a program's effectiveness. D.A.R.E. has been scrutinized in different research studies that have concluded in contrasting conclusions about the worth of D.A.R.E. A three-year study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, and carried out by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), has called into question the value of the D.A.R.E. program (RTI, 1994) . Among the questions sought to be answered by the researchers were :

- * How extensively is D.A.R.E. implemented nationwide?
- * How is D.A.R.E. managed and funded at the national, state, and local levels?
- * How does D.A.R.E. compare with other substance abuse prevention programs in community support, satisfaction, and effectiveness (Ringwalt, Christopher, et al, Past and Future Directions of the D.A.R.E. Program: An Evaluation Review, September 1994). Statistically, RTI asserts that there is no significant difference in the prevention of drug abuse among fourth through sixth graders that have been exposed to the D.A.R.E. core curriculum verses those that have not. Some parents have also questioned the impact of

the program, questioning its methodology as similar to the touchy-feely pop psychology of the 1970's. Another issue that the study questioned and which will be discussed in a separate section is the question of whether scarce financial resources and law enforcement personnel are being used in the most efficient manner to address the drug abuse problem. In contrast to the above report, D.A.R.E. America has asserted that the report released by Research Triangle Institute actually supports the proposition that the D.A.R.E. curriculum is worthwhile and a valuable tool in the prevention of the increase of substance abuse. An objective method of determining the value of the current program was to examine the data relative to the amount of financial and manpower resources being expended to support the D.A.R.E. program locally and nationwide. These will be discussed in the following section.

Is It Worth the Price? The Social and Political Economics of D.A.R.E.

The D.A.R.E. program commands a big budget. States are required to give \$10 million a year to Drug-Free schools under the Drug Free School Act. More than 700 million a year is spent nationally, with 2,700 law-enforcement officers assigned to the program (PR Newswire May 3, 1994). Local funding for four D.A.R.E. officers and supplies totals approximately

\$70,000 dollars. This represents the salaries for the deputies which are provided by the state and constitutes the current total program investment.

Summary

In response to the growing substance abuse problem among juveniles, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) was developed as a way of reaching students through early intervention. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is an educational effort designed to teach students about illegal drugs and how to deal with peer pressure often associated with a student's first experience with drugs. Since 1983, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) has grown as a program to include a budget of more than 700 million with over 2,700 law enforcement officers.

However, several studies, such as the one released by the Research Triangle Institute have questioned the value of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. In order to identify the impact of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), it was necessary to review the literature covering the preceding topics. The results of the methods and procedures used in the following chapter were obtained in light of the information gathered as a result of this review.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of the procedures used in the collection of the information gathered to address the problem of this research study. This chapter defines the Population, Instrument Design, Methods of Data Collection, and Statistical Analysis used.

Population

The population of this study was 11,294 public school students in the fifth grade in the Portsmouth Public School system during the school years 1987 through 1994. The yearly population totals of students that have received Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) training are listed in Appendix A of this report.

Instrument Design

The local D.A.R.E. program used the enrollment figures from the Portsmouth Public School System's fifth grade Enrollment Report to track the number of students it had reached. This information reflected actual head count figures reported by the individual teachers of each fifth grade class.

The Uniform Crime Report from the Department of Justice, as provided by the Portsmouth Police Department, was also used to report the number of juvenile arrests for the relevant years, and may be found in Appendix B of this study. The total of juvenile substance abuse related arrests was 252.

Data Collection

The local D.A.R.E. program used the enrollment figures from the Portsmouth Public School System's fifth grade Enrollment Report to track the number of students it had reached. The Uniform Crime Report from the Department of Justice, which was provided by the Planning and Analysis Division of the Portsmouth Police Department, was used to track the juvenile arrest rate.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered was used to identify the breadth of the study's population being reached and was analyzed to identify the effectiveness of the local D.A.R.E. program. By comparing the fluctuation in the number of substance abuse related crimes among juveniles, an analysis of the impact Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) made on the juvenile arrest

rate was identified.

Summary

The data that was collected for this study came from the Portsmouth Public School System and the Department of Justice as provided by the Portsmouth Police Department. After analyzing the information, it was statistically compared to the fluctuation of the juvenile arrest rate in relation to the population reached by the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program. In addition, the amount of resources expended on this effort was examined. Chapter IV of this research paper will include findings based on the statistics and Chapter V will offer conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Recent crime reports have shown that substance abuse offenses among juveniles in Portsmouth, Virginia, have increased (Department of Justice, Uniform Crime Report, 1994). The problem of this study was to determine if an identifiable impact has been made by the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program that has been implemented in the Portsmouth Public Elementary schools. This section of the study identifies the number of students being reached by the D.A.R.E. program during the years 1987-1994. The number of juvenile arrests for substance abuse related crimes compared to the number of fifth grade students receiving Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) training is also examined.

Student Enrollment in D.A.R.E. in Portsmouth, Virginia

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a graphical representation of the number of students that have received D.A.R.E. training in Portsmouth, Virginia, for the years 1987-1994. Figure 1 depicts the number of students enrolled in the fifth grade in Portsmouth, Virginia, as reported by the school system's Planning and Research Department.

Students in D.A.R.E.

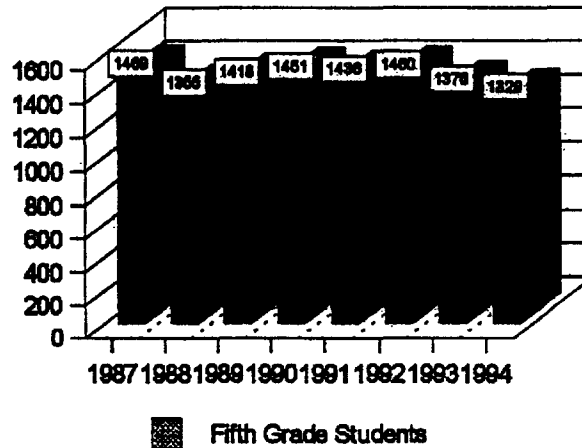


Figure 1

The process of identifying the number of students exposed to Drug Abuse Resistance Education in Portsmouth, Virginia, was based on the above numbers. This representation reflects exposure to the program, as it would be impossible, if not impractical for the purposes of this study, to only identify those students which were present for every session taught over the course's entire sixteen week period. The graph shows that a total of 11,294 students, representing 100 percent of the fifth grade students enrolled, were exposed to D.A.R.E. training during the years 1987-1994. This figure represents a significant number of students reached by a minimal staff of four training instructors.

Juvenile Arrests for Substance Abuse Related Crimes

For the purposes of this research study, the single variable selected to indicate the effectiveness of the D.A.R.E. program was the number of juvenile arrests for substance abuse related crimes. These offenses included narcotic possession as well as manufacturer and distribution. Additionally, alcohol abuse offenses such as driving under the influence, public intoxication and liquor law violations were tallied. Figure 2 shows the total number of offenses for the years 1987-1994. Although the 1994 arrest figures indicated a 50 percent increase over 1993, and a 100 percent increase over 1987 figures, interviews with local law enforcement officials revealed that this was reflective of intensified law-enforcement efforts.

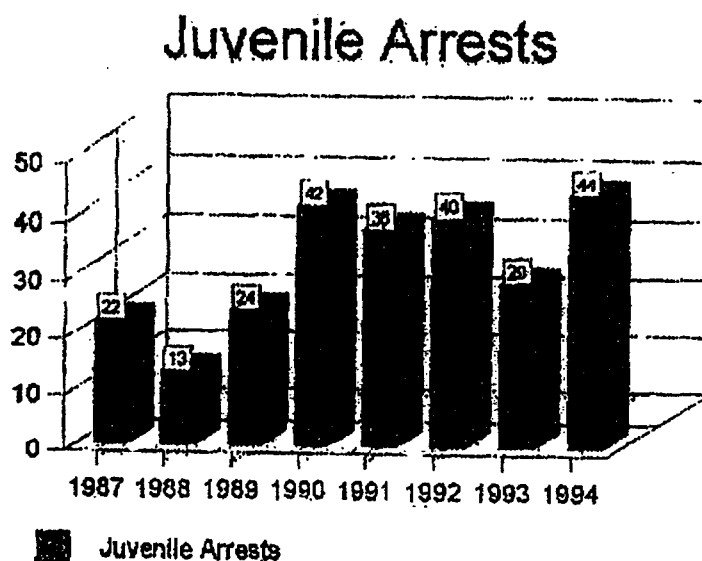


Figure 2

Juvenile Verses Adult Arrests

In order to determine if the D.A.R.E. program was impacting the arrest rate of juveniles, it was determined that a comparison between the juvenile and the adult arrest statistics would be the appropriate data to analyze to identify if any trends of substance abuse related crimes were homogenous to the population studied or if the fluctuations identified were a result of overall societal trends. Figure 3 shows the comparison trend of adult and juvenile substance-abuse related trends and represents a fairly consistent fluctuation in the arrest rate between the two groups.

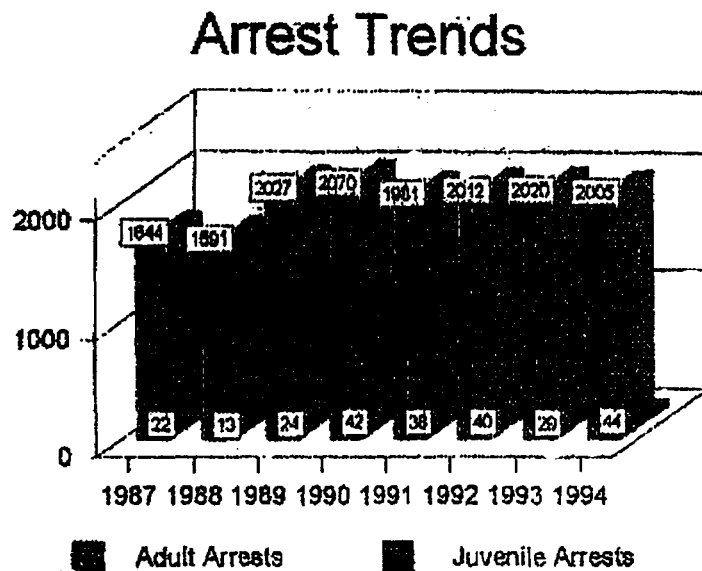


Figure 3

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine if there was an identifiable impact being made on the juvenile arrest rates for substance abuse related crimes among elementary age students in the Portsmouth Public Schools that have been exposed to the Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. The statistical findings for the years 1987 through 1994 have been analyzed and conclusions from this data are drawn in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes the study's summary, conclusions and recommendations. The summary provides an overview of the first four chapters. Conclusions are drawn by answering the research goals using the data gathered during the research study. Recommendations for future research will be made based upon the study's results.

Summary

The problem of this research study was to identify the number of students receiving Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) training, the cost to the City of Portsmouth for this program and any fluctuations in the number of substance abuse related arrests among juveniles during the years 1987 through 1994. The research goals for this study included:

1. Identify the number of elementary age students in the fifth grade in Portsmouth, Virginia, that are receiving Drug Abuse Resistance Education training.

2. Determine the amount of funds being invested by the City of Portsmouth to reduce substance abuse by adolescents and the effectiveness of the current program.
3. Identify any positive change in the juvenile substance abuse related arrests made in Portsmouth, Virginia, during the years 1987-1994.

As substance abuse and the illegal drug culture proliferates our society, our nation's youth have come under seige. A survey of available literature indicated that a serious problem existed and that a pro-active examination of how to combat the ill effects of this societal plague must be undertaken, including the methods of substance abuse prevention such as the D.A.R.E. program.

This research study was limited to the fifth grade students in the Portsmouth Public School System that participated in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program for the years 1987 through 1994 and was represented by the Student Enrollment Reports from the Portsmouth Public School's Department of Planning and Research. The study was further limited by the arrest reports for juveniles in the corresponding age group as

reported by the Department of Justice's Uniform Crime Report for Portsmouth, Virginia. The data was collected and analyzed to generate information on the impact of D.A.R.E. training on the juvenile arrest rate.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions can be made.

1. Identify the number of elementary age students in the fifth grade in Portsmouth, Virginia, that are receiving Drug Abuse Resistance Education training.

The data indicated that during the years 1987 through 1994, 11,294 students received Drug Abuse Resistance Education training. This number reflects the number of fifth grade students enrolled in the Portsmouth Public Elementary schools during those years and is a significant number of program participants. It represented 100 percent of the student population.

2. Determine the amount of funds being invested by the City of Portsmouth to reduce substance abuse by adolescents and the effectiveness of the current program.

The data indicated that the amount of funds being invested in the D.A.R.E. program included only the salary and supply costs of four D.A.R.E. Officers. The salary and supply costs which totalled \$70,000 were funded by direct grants from the State and required no matching local funds.

3. Identify the positive change in juvenile substance abuse related arrests made in Portsmouth, Virginia, during the years 1987-1994.

Graphical analysis of the fluctuations in the arrest rate for the period of 1987 through 1994 indicated a trend that was consistent with the fluctuations in the adult arrest rate for the same offenses. The charted data demonstrated that the juvenile arrest trends closely followed the arrest trends of adults.

Stepped up enforcement and public awareness of the endemic problem of substance abuse among juveniles supported this consistent trend. The findings support a conclusion of significant program value when it was considered that the number of juvenile arrests during the reported periods represents a .02 percent of the total population studied. This data reflected a 98 percent success rate.

Recommendations

Based on the information gathered and the conclusions drawn, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. Continue to offer the D.A.R.E. curriculum to Portsmouth's fifth grade students. The number of juvenile arrested for substance abuse related crimes amounted to only .02 percent of the total students exposed to the D.A.R.E. curriculum thereby indicating a 98 percent success rate.
2. Expand the program to include junior high and secondary level curricula to reinforce the principles of the elementary level program.
3. Provide training to school teachers to help them identify behaviors associated with potential substance abusers.
4. Initial booking of juvenile offenders should include a tracking question indicating if the offender had been exposed to Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

5. Continue cooperative effort by law enforcement, the school system, and the community so that the successes of the D.A.R.E. program as a substance abuse prevention tool will continue.

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APPENDIX A

Portsmouth Public Elementary School Fifth Grade Enrollment Reports for
the Years 1987-1994

APPENDIX A
Portsmouth Public Elementary School Fifth Grade Enrollment Reports
for the Years
1987-1994

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL 5th Grade Students</u>
<u>1987</u>	<u>1469</u>
<u>1989</u>	<u>1355</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>1418</u>
<u>1991</u>	<u>1451</u>
<u>1992</u>	<u>1436</u>
<u>1993</u>	<u>1460</u>
<u>1994</u>	<u>1376</u>

Appendix B

Juvenile Substance Abuse Related Arrest Statistics for Portsmouth, VA,
1987-1994

APPENDIX B
JUVENILE SUBSTANCE- ABUSE RELATED ARREST
STATISTICS FOR PORTSMOUTH, VA
1987-1994

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1987	22
1988	13
1989	24
1990	42
1991	38
1992	40
1993	29
1994	44