

Monitoring & Evaluation Program



UW-Extension
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Center for Health Policy and Program Evaluation

**Program Brief
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Baseline Assessment of 2001 School Tobacco Programs

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In 2001 the Department of Public Instruction, with a grant from the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board, requested applications from schools to implement programs designed to enhance tobacco education and policy in Wisconsin's public schools. Forty-six (42%) of the 109 district and consortium applicants received Tobacco Program Grants designed to create or improve upon strategies identified as effective in reducing or eliminating youth tobacco use. Using a standard tool based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction (1994), all applicants assessed the tobacco policies and programs for each school building within their districts for which they sought funding. These self-assessments provide an overview of the extent to which Wisconsin schools are implementing best practices in tobacco control, as recommended in the Guidelines.

In order to monitor progress in implementing the CDC guidelines among schools that received Tobacco Program Grant funding from their districts, these baseline findings will be compared with those from follow-up assessments conducted one year later.

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Major findings:

- **The total amount awarded to the 46 funded applicants was \$1,062,194. The 165 funded school buildings serve a total of 273,028 students.**
- **Applicant schools scored highest in the areas of Policy and Curriculum and lowest in the areas of Staff Training, Family and Community Involvement, Cessation, and Evaluation.**
- **Funded districts had lower average scores (50% of total) than did non-funded districts (54% of total) assessing their compliance with CDC guidelines—the more needy districts were funded.**

Background

In order to reduce and eventually eliminate use, the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board (WTCB) established a School Tobacco Program. The goal is to increase schools' compliance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction (1994). In order to gauge progress toward this goal, an assessment tool was developed to measure school compliance with the Guidelines. The expectation is that funded schools will create or greatly improve upon policies and programs that reduce and eliminate youth tobacco use.

Methods

Assessment questions were developed by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) from the CDC's Guidelines. Assistance was provided by the Tobacco Control Board's Monitoring & Evaluation Program. The seven assessment sections follow the CDC's recommendations for ensuring quality school programs that prevent, reduce or eliminate tobacco use: Policy, Curriculum, Instruction, Staff Training, Family and Community Involvement, Tobacco Cessation, and Evaluation. Assessments measured the level to which each school building had tobacco education programs and policies in place consistent with CDC guidelines. Wisconsin public school districts and consortia interested in applying for the School Tobacco Program Grants were required to submit completed self-assessments for each school building for which they sought funding as part of their grant applications.

In April 2001, 109 applications were received from 98 school districts and 11 consortia. Assessments included 58 questions in the seven sections outlined above. Each question was scored according to whether a recommended policy or practice existed ('yes'), existed only to some degree ('somewhat'), or did not exist at all ('no'). 'Yes' responses received two points, 'somewhat' responses received one point each, and 'no' and 'don't know' responses received zero points. The higher the score, the better the school's implementation of CDC's guidelines. All scores are expressed as a percent of possible points.

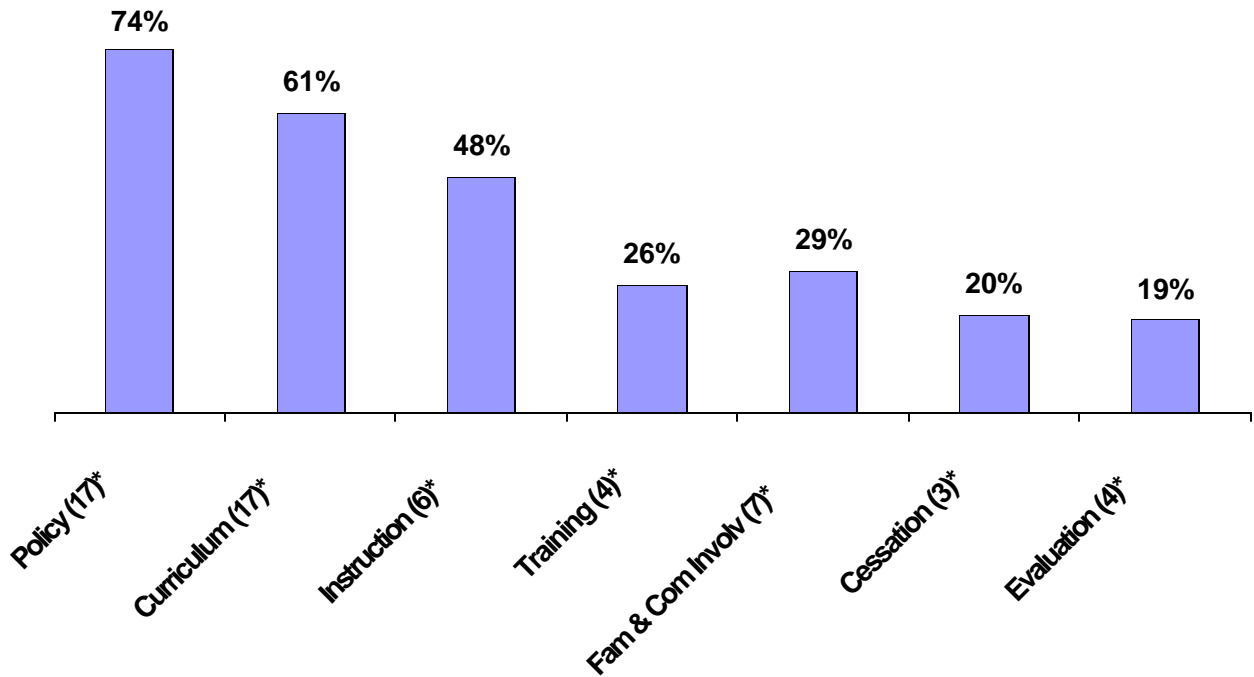
Results

One important aspect of this study is to compare schools' emphasis among the seven assessment components. *Figure 1* depicts differences in school mean assessment scores by the seven assessment categories, including all applicant buildings. Schools overwhelmingly scored highest in the areas of Policy and Curriculum, and are therefore doing a relatively good job in meeting the CDC's guidelines aimed at reducing and eliminating youth tobacco use in these areas. Lower mean scores were noted in the areas of Evaluation, Cessation, Training, and Family and Community Involvement. These data indicate a general lack of emphasis in the areas with low mean scores.

Another key aspect of this study was to compare funded and non-funded grant applicants (*Table 1*). Funding selection criteria consisted of application narrative content as well as these assessments. Of the 109 applications, 46 (42%) were awarded a total of \$1,062,194 in funding—an average of \$6,438 per school building.

Breaking down the funded recipients by school building and student numbers paints a clearer picture of who benefited from the School Tobacco Program grants. All applicant districts and consortia taken together represented 458,980 children. Of these children, 59% attend the 165 school buildings that received funding, as seen in *Table 2*. The School Tobacco Program Grants were awarded to districts and consortia covering a combined total student population of 273,028.

Figure 1. Comparison of School Mean Assessment Scores by Category



* Denotes number of items (questions) in each component area.

Table 1. Grant Application and Award Amounts by Funding Status

Is Applicant Funded for Tobacco Control Activities?	Number of Applicants (Districts & Consortia)	Grant Amount Requested (Districts & Consortia)	Grant Amount Received (Districts & Consortia)
Yes	46 (42%)	\$1,097,624 (45%)	\$1,062,194
No	63 (58%)	\$1,341,219 (55%)	N/A
Total	109 (100%)	\$2,438,843 (100%)	\$1,062,194

Table 2. Grant Recipient School Buildings and Students by Funding Status

Is Applicant Funded for Tobacco Control Activities?	Number of School Buildings	Number of Students
Yes	165 (53%)	273,028 (59%)
No	148 (47%)	185,952 (41%)
Totals	313 (100%)	458,980 (100%)

Table 3 demonstrates small differences between mean (average) scores of funded and non-funded schools. Significant differences were noted with respect to the overall assessment score, as well as in the areas of Policy and Curriculum. On average, the buildings that were funded had slightly lower scores, indicating greater need for either new or improved strategies in tobacco education programming and policy.

Table 3. Mean (average) School Building Score Differences between Funded and Non-Funded Schools, by Assessment Component Areas

Funding Status	Assessment Components							
	Total *	Policy *	Curriculum *	Instruction	Training	Family and Community Involvement	Cessation	Evaluation
Funded	50%	73%	57%	47%	28%	29%	18%	19%
Non-Funded	54%	77%	67%	48%	24%	29%	20%	19%
Number of Items (Questions)	58	17	17	6	4	7	3	4

* Denotes significant differences.

Comment

Applicant school buildings scored highest—and came closest to meeting the CDC guidelines—in the assessment areas of Policy and Curriculum. Average scores were well above the mid-range in these two areas. In contrast, schools fell far below the mid-range scores in the areas of Training, Family and Community Involvement, Cessation, and Evaluation. These are areas where schools will need to focus more attention and resources in order to provide quality tobacco education programming consistent with CDC guidelines.

Results indicated that, on average, those schools with slightly lower assessment scores—less likely to be meeting the CDC's guidelines for school programs to reduce tobacco use—received grant funding. Funded schools are expected to create and improve upon strategies for reducing and eliminating youth tobacco use.

This pre-grant assessment serves as a baseline against which to compare future status of funded schools after implementing grant-funded activities. Follow-up assessments are planned for June 2002 and June 2003. Results will be analyzed to gauge success in reaching the School Tobacco Program primary outcome: by June 30, 2002 all WTCB-funded schools will have policies and programs in place with greater consistency with the CDC Guidelines as compared to the April 2001 baseline.

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 Earnestine Willis, M.D., M.P.H., Chair
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Full technical report is available from the Monitoring & Evaluation Program. Please call 263-8627 to request a copy.