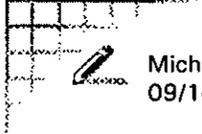


NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 020 - Folder 019

**Education - Safe and Drug Free
Schools**



Michael Cohen
09/14/98 01:36:19 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
cc: Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP
Subject: ONDCP letter

Jose and I put the following (see below) together as the guts of a cover note from Bruce regarding McCaffrey's letter.

We have a similar issue to resolve on the appropriations bill -- the Senate Labor/HHS approps bill provides \$150 million for ED to carry out a national competition to award grants to school districts for safe schools programs, based on proven practices. ED had requested \$125 million that would be given to states on a formula basis (like the current program) but with the requirement that the states distribute it on a competitive basis. ED likes the Senate approach. However, OMB anticipates that ONDCP will not like this provision, because it focuses on safety rather than drugs. Barbara Chow wants to pull a meeting together soon to figure out our position for the SAP. I think this is a good idea--its necessary, and its an opportunity for me to get a better handle on how to deal with both the reauthorization issue and the ONDCP staff (who I don't know).

Cover note for McCaffrey letter:

We have been working with the Education Department on a proposal to overhaul the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, for announcement at the Oct. 15 Safe Schools Conference. The Education Department's proposal is similar to ONDCP's in many respects -- stronger accountability provisions, better targeting of the funds to school districts with the greatest need, and requirements that the funds be used on research-based programs with demonstrated effectiveness. However, whereas ONDCP proposes to focus this program primarily on reducing youth drug use, the Education Department proposes to focus it primarily on creating safe and orderly schools.

DPC is planning to bring both agencies together to work toward an agreed-upon approach to overhauling the program. Such an approach would include (1) the accountability and targeting components they already agree upon, (2) strategies that can help keep schools safe and students drug-free (e.g., clear, firm and fully enforced discipline and drug policies, better connections between students and adults, and programs that teach character and responsible decision making) and, (3) consideration of an increased budget request for an effectively overhauled program.

RR
say something
about hiring

Educ - Safe + Drug Free Schools



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D. C. 20503

Reese

September 9, 1998

Dear Mr. President:

Wanted to share my thoughts with you and enlist your ideas and support for improving the vital Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. Beginning with the RTI study and the 1997 GAO report, "Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Balancing Accountability with Local Flexibility," and continuing through the publication of recent news articles (e.g., the *LA Times*, "Failing Grade for Safe Schools Program"), the program has come under significant criticism. An internal ONDCP review confirms many of these criticisms (enclosed). Yet, the program is far too important to allow it to flounder.

With your leadership, and that of Secretary Riley, we can reinvigorate the program and make it what it must be: a strong voice in educating children, protecting their lives and futures, and keeping schools safe and free from drugs. Both your *National Drug Control Strategy* and the National Education goals agree that reducing youth drug use is imperative. At the same time, however, the *National Household Survey* shows youth drug use rates rising, in some cases to unfortunate historic levels. Clearly, we cannot afford ineffective or wasteful school-based counter-drug approaches. Instead, we need to apply the available dollars into efficient, accountable, and effective programs that meet our obligation to our children to protect them from danger, especially the perils that come with drug use.

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program should be our primary vehicle for achieving this goal. ONDCP and the Department of Education must work together to reform this program along the following lines:

- **Create Accountability.** The current framework provides no effective means of ensuring that monies are spent on programs that are proven to reduce youth drug use. Nor are the mechanisms in place to monitor adequately how monies are spent. We must establish performance measures and build in systemic reviews to ensure that dollars are well spent in classrooms and school districts across the nation. This may require us to use a variety of vehicles, ranging from changes in the underlying legislation to issuing binding regulations. To bring this about, we need to develop a plan for what is necessary, make the case to the public and put the program in place.
- **Provide the Resources Required.** At present the average local education agency Safe and Drug Free Schools grant is roughly \$5,000. Some schools receive as little as \$50 per year to help fight drugs. Our spending per student is roughly \$7.90 per year. Congressional cuts and growing enrollments will diminish this number more still. These funds are inadequate to the enormous educational task we face: changing a generation's attitudes about drugs in the face of countervailing societal pressures that normalize, and at times even glamorize, drug use. We need to rethink both the resource levels of this program, and how they are distributed. For example, a more adequate formula might even

triple the program's grant funding, but require some form of state-match for a portion of the funding received.

- **Focus on the Threat of Drugs.** While school violence is a major problem that requires a strong federal response, youth drug use rates are such that we need to reorient a greater percentage of the program on fighting drugs. This year's *Household* survey found that past month drug use among 12-17 year olds rose from 7.1 percent in 1996 to 9.4 percent. Marijuana use by 12-13 year olds doubled from 1996 to 1997. Drug use is a contributing factor to many of the ills plaguing our schools. Young people (ages 12 to 17) who regularly smoke marijuana (more than 52 times in a year) are roughly five times more likely to physically attack another person than youth who do not use the drug. Young people (ages 12 to 17) who regularly smoke marijuana (more than 52 times in a year) are roughly six times more likely to cut classes than youth who do not use the drug. Stealing, destruction of property and other problems all show similar links to drug use rates. Focusing the program more on fighting drug use will have the effect of attacking a wide range of the problems our schools and children face. This reorientation must penetrate all levels, most importantly our nation's classrooms.

In this era of fiscal responsibility and facing rising youth drug use, it is incumbent upon us to immediately beginning correcting the shortcomings in the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. However we elect to proceed, it is clear that we can no longer continue with business as usual. We must begin without delay an ONDCP/Department of Education inter-agency process that will put this program on track. Suggest that Secretary Riley and ONDCP deliver to you an action plan for your approval by this Thanksgiving.

U/R

Sincerely,



Barry K. McCaffrey

The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Drug prevention is the heart of our national strategy. We will need new legislation to fix the Drug Free School program.

September 4, 1998

**ONDCP INTERNAL ANALYSIS:
THE SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

SUMMARY: The Safe and Drug Free Schools Program (SDFS) is the nation's primary federal youth counter-drug education program. Apart from ONDCP's Youth Media Campaign, it is the only nation-wide federal effort of significant size that aims to protect children from drugs. The SDFS suffers from a near complete lack of accountability and oversight, it simultaneously seems to waste millions of dollars of federal funds and is tragically under-funded. There is significant Congressional interest in eliminating what could -- with major reforms and sufficient funding -- be a vital program. Reform is needed.

SDFS LACKS GOALS, RULES, OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The bulk of SDFS monies go by block grants to state education agencies (SEAs), which pass the bulk of these funds on to local education agencies (LEAs -- predominantly school districts). Education delegates most award and monitoring of these LEA funds to the SEAs.

The program is vital and must be fixed:

- SDFS is the primary federal, school-based anti-drug program.
- SDFS reaches 97 percent of our nation's school districts.
- Recent studies show that illegal drugs remain a major problem in the school environment. In-school drug trafficking and use also is a significant contributing factor to crime and violence within our schools.
- Eliminating the program would create a major gap in our *National Drug Control Strategy*, which would undermine progress toward goal one of that *Strategy*: educating children to reject drugs.

Spending is not tied to achievement of objectives:

- As applied to the block grant program, SDFS goals are only loosely outlined in the SDFS legislation and in non-binding guidance.
- No binding regulations have ever been issued for the program.
- Each SEA is free to set its own goals. Little or no monitoring is done to tie funding to performance of even these objectives.
- Data to track performance is uniformly nonexistent -- the states set their own data requirements and these vary widely, with few reaching the level of bare acceptability.
- There is no requirement that LEAs use programs that are proven to work. To the contrary, the *RTI study* found that few schools adopt research-based, proven programs. (Relatively new guidance suggests that schools shift to such programs, but nothing requires this.)

Spending is not adequately tracked:

- There is no information available that breaks down how much SDFS money went to drug versus violence (i.e., the emphasis is on the "Safe" in Safe and Drug Free Schools) efforts.
- There is no information available that shows what monies are spent for (e.g., training versus curriculum).
- Neither the LEAs nor SEAs aggregate their funding by category.

Monitoring varies widely, but in only rare cases is it remotely adequate:

- According to GAO, 4 (of the 50) states monitor *only* by approving applications for money (i.e., they approve and look no more).
- Only 9 states specifically review documentation. However, the scope of information reviewed varies widely (e.g., many states do not even require spending vouchers or receipts be submitted).
- Site visits are rare. On average SEAs only go to each LEA (district) once every 3-4 years). In 1995, only 1,900 site visits were conducted nationwide. However, this number is inflated by the few states that do conduct more regular oversight; many states do few or no visits.
- Only 7 states use multiple forms of monitoring.
- GAO reports, Education rarely reviews beyond the state level. GAO reports that only three audits have gone to site level. (Education is *surveying* LEAs now as to how money is used.)
- Even at the SEA level, Education's monitoring is minimal. In 1996-97, education only visited 20 state offices to review program documents. However, as the SEA documentation is so limited (see above) and varies widely, what can be gleaned from these visits appears minimal.

Due to the lack of accountability, problems seem to abound:

- In two of the three instances (noted above) where complaints led to fuller LEA level audits of SDFS spending irregularities were present.
 - ➔ The Michigan audit found, for example, "double dipping" and the purchase of items not related to either drug or violence education (e.g., toothbrushes, dog bones and bicycle pumps).
 - ➔ The West Virginia audit found that SEAs handed out money without even the statutory minimum application information (e.g., what purposes funds were sought for) and expenditures were not broken down between administration and actual programs.

PROGRAM/CHILDREN AT RISK

SDFS simultaneously seems to waste millions and yet its funding is woefully inadequate:

- Information and oversight flaws, coupled with anecdotal evidence, suggest that SDFS fritters away millions of dollars (\$550 million in actual spending in FY1997).
- However, the program funds 97% of all school districts -- a mile-wide and not a centimeter deep. The average school *district* gets roughly \$5,000. Some schools receive as little as \$50. Spending per child is roughly \$7.90 per year. However, as there is no way to determine what money actually reached children, this estimate (total program expenditures divided by number of children served) likely overstates the actual per child spending (e.g., local admin. costs are included that children never directly benefit from).
- Without growth the dollar per child expenditures will drop significantly as "baby boom echo" school populations grow. During 1997-2003, students in grades 6-8 will increase by over 1 million. During 1997-2007, students in grades 9-12 will grow by over 1.5 million.

Lack of focus:

- Anecdotal evidence suggests that the program is increasingly shifting to violence prevention at the expense of drug prevention.
- Despite long-standing issues, reforms have largely tinkered at the margins -- conducting surveys, trying to reinvigorate a "pat on the back" recognition program, conferences, guidelines and the like, all of which have no bite. The impetus to undertake real reforms has yet to arise -- major reforms will require leadership, dedication and effort to build the constituencies necessary.

These flaws place the program at risk:

- Congressional support for the program is in question.
- Congress has cut the President's FY1999 proposal for new school drug coordinators (\$5 million to fund 1,300 coordinators), which was to serve as the cornerstone for further reforms.
- Reauthorization is pending in two years.

FIXING THE PROGRAM

Suggestions for what is needed:

- Reinvigorate SDFS's drug component.
- Overhaul -- radically reform -- the program through legislation and regulations that are binding and provide for: performance measures, targets, goals, and systems of accountability (data collection and review and overall monitoring).
- Significantly grow the program through additional funding with a state match component (suggest 2 federal dollars for every state dollar to ensure money is available for poor/at risk)
- Without undermining the broad reach of the program, better target spending by threat not just population, at all levels -- national to local.
- Require that money be spent on research-based, proven programs, with some leeway for research-based experimentation.

9-28-98

key areas: (1) refocus attention on the African Growth and Opportunity Act next year, given Congress' likely failure to pass it this year; (2) provide significant aid to Kenya and Tanzania, as we have promised; and (3) show that we have a coordinated approach, under your African Partnership Initiative, to aid in the development of Africa's commercial infrastructure.

(E) **McCaffrey Memo on Safe and Drug Free Schools Program** -- The program has been criticized recently as ineffective and lacking accountability. Gen. McCaffery acknowledges shortcomings in the program and recommends that ONDCP and DOEd coordinate a legislative reform program. At our request, Bruce Reed reviewed McCaffery's memo and commented that DPC has been working with DOEd on an overhaul proposal for announcement at the October 15 Safe Schools Conference. DOEd's proposal is similar to ONDCP's but, rather than focus primarily on drugs, it would emphasize safe and orderly schools. DPC plans to bring DOEd and ONDCP together to reach consensus on a reform plan before the Safe Schools Conference.

agan

We also have received the following item:

✓ **USIA Pamphlet on Africa Trip** -- Joe Duffey sent you copies of "President Clinton Visits Africa: Building a New Partnership," which chronicles your visit to Africa. To build on the positive momentum of your trip, USIS posts in Africa distributed the document to African government officials, journalists and school groups during Fourth of July celebrations at U.S. embassies. *We have copies in our office.*

→ Get am su om

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