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In the spring of 2017, we sent out a request to our community partners to complete a brief online survey regarding their use of Project ALERT. We purposefully sent our survey to educators beyond our established network of newsletter subscribers to learn more about the reach of the program. I wanted to share with you a few findings from that survey effort, as well as some data we have collected from those who have received training on our website.

First, let me start by thanking all of you who completed the survey. Although it is always nice to hear from educators that they enjoy using the program and believe it is effective for youth, we are excited to have more in-depth data that can help us look for ways to improve the program and increase its reach to help middle school youth make healthy decisions.

During February to May of 2017, **1,128 respondents completed the survey.**

Respondents came from all 50 states.

- Those with the most representation were California, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Washington, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Illinois, and Indiana.
- These are also the states with the largest number of trained Project ALERT facilitators.

Respondents came from many different professions. The largest numbers of respondents were:

- Teachers (35%)
- Administrators such as Principals, Vice/Assistant Principals, or Superintendents (17%)
- Prevention education specialists or health educators (15%)
- School non-teaching staff such as counselors, psychologists, and nurses (12%)

We also have a large following among the Young Marines, a national youth organization, and 114 of their leaders who use the program completed the survey.

Respondents worked in many different settings and primarily were from:

- Public schools (69%)
- Young Marines (9%)
- Non-profit or community organizations (8%)
- Private schools (4%)

Of the 1,128 educators that responded, more than half (58%) had received training in Project ALERT.

- Of those that received training, 56% utilized our no-cost online training program alone, 31% received only in-person training from a Project ALERT expert trainer, and 13% received both in-person and online training.
- It appeared that the survey participants were more likely to complete in-person trainings than our larger user base. From our internal records, we know that about 80% of Project ALERT educators receive their training from our free online interactive program. But in-person training is available. Contact us if you are interested.

Of those that received some training, the number receiving training has been increasing steadily over the past 25 years. Data we have collected on our users confirm that we continue to have over 1,000 new educators complete trainings each year.

Project ALERT continues to be taught at many schools throughout the country. Among the respondents in the survey, we found that **Project ALERT was being taught during the current school year in over 500 different middle schools** around the country. Our website database also indicates that we have **trained Project ALERT educators in over 3,400 middle schools** around the country, with **over 35,000 unique adult educators that have been trained** to teach Project ALERT.

Among the survey respondents who reported that Project ALERT was being taught this year, most reported that they taught the program during the school day. Only 5% taught the program after school.

- 34% taught Project ALERT during health classes
- 20% taught Project ALERT during science classes
- 19% taught Project ALERT during guidance classes, during study hall, art/religion classes, or other classes

- 14% taught Project ALERT during physical education classes
- 4% taught Project ALERT during history/social studies classes
- 4% had dedicated time for a drug prevention class

Among the survey respondents who reported that Project ALERT was being taught this school year, most (88%) reported that they were able to teach the lessons within 30 to 60 minutes.

Of the respondents who reported teaching the program at some point, nearly all (99%) found that the program is useful for preventing risky substance use among youth.

Although not all respondents had much familiarity with the program, they were asked what they liked about Project ALERT. Of those that reported at least a little familiarity with the program:

- 65% like that it is easy to implement at schools
- 60% like that the curriculum is free
- 68% like that materials are all available online
- 52% like that there is a solid evidence and research base supporting the effects
- 36% have personally found that the free interactive online training makes it easy to learn

Alternatively, although not all respondents had much familiarity with the program, they were asked what they would like to see improved or changed about Project ALERT. Of those that reported at least a little familiarity with the program:

- 58% reported that there could be greater focus on emerging drug issues like growing legalization of recreational and medical marijuana
- 56% reported that there could be more focus on e-cigarettes in lesson content
- 56% reported that the student videos could be updated
- 46% reported there could be more interactive opportunities for students, such as ways to incorporate social media and texting into the curriculum
- 37% reported that the drug prevention posters could be updated
- 30% felt that the overall number of lessons could be reduced or that the length of time it took to each individual lesson could be reduced

Here are some takeaways that we learned from the survey.

- Project ALERT is still widely used in its intended format across the country.
- Educators take advantage of our online training and find the program easy to implement at their schools.
- Educators appreciate that the program is based on strong research evidence.
- Educators are finding time to implement the program during the school day, typically taking between 30 and 60 minutes to teach each of the lessons.
- Educators see ways that Project ALERT can be improved. We hear you and have been making efforts in the past few years to update our curriculum and address aspects of the program that can be improved. Specifically,
  - We have revised the entire manual and all lessons to include content addressing e-cigarette use and medical and current recreational marijuana legislation.
  - We have published supplemental guides on marijuana, e-cigarettes, heroin/opioids, and club drugs for teachers and students.
  - We have recently published *El Apéndice de Marihuana*, a Spanish version of our supplemental guide on marijuana.
  - We are pilot testing an alternate lesson on opioids (focused on prescription pain killers and heroin) in a proposed randomized controlled trial to address emerging concerns about opioid misuse and abuse among youth.
  - We have plans to update the videos and posters. If you and your students are interested in participating in this effort, please let us know.
  - We have plans to test a reduced lesson program in a randomized controlled trial to provide empirical evidence to a shorter program that can better fit the demanding schedules of today's youth in schools.

Thank you again for your participation in the survey and for your continued support of Project ALERT. We are working hard on several projects to keep the program updated, free-of-charge, and easily implemented to all schools and community organizations in the effort to prevent adolescent drug use. Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions or comments about how to implement Project ALERT in your setting, have ideas for improvements, or want to share stories about how the program has affected you and your students.