

School/Community Group Continues Efforts to Prevent Substance Use Among Maranacook Students

This fall, a strong and committed group of parents and school system staff is working to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among RSU #38 students. The group is following up on a comprehensive action plan that was presented to the School Board last spring. A powerful, proven prevention course, *Life Skills*, has been incorporated into the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade curricula. The course teaches students about the risks of use, and how to make and sustain healthy choices.

Members of the School Policy and Procedure Subcommittee, which includes school board members, are looking closely at school policy and procedures concerning possession and use of alcohol and other drugs on campus and at school sponsored events. A goal of this group is to strengthen policy, support consistent implementation of policy, and ensure that the consequences of policy violations help students make healthier choices in the long run.

The practice of bringing drug-sniffing dogs into school buildings, which began last spring, will continue this year, in cooperation with the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office. School officials are working hard to make the Maranacook Schools drug free.

In its most recent meeting, the group agreed to explore creating chemical-free events for students, in an effort to recognize and support the majority of the student body, which does not use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Rebecca Lambert, parent of two Maranacook secondary school students, has been hired with funding from a small, one-time grant from Healthy Communities of the Capital Area to help staff and support this school-community partnership. For more information, contact Rebecca at rebecca_lambert@maranacook.org.

Parents: The Most Important Factor In Preventing Teen Substance Use

Youth who **don't** think their parents will catch them and hold them accountable for using alcohol or other drugs are **six times more likely to use**, according to an analysis of Maine youth survey data released last spring by the Office of Substance Abuse. The message is clear: in order to help youth make the right choices, parents must be very clear about their expectations—and follow up to make sure family rules are honored.

There are lots of great materials available through the Office of Substance Abuse, and elsewhere on the web, to help parents help kids stay safe. Check out the OSA website: <http://maine.gov/dhhs/osa/prevention/adult/index.htm>

The Maranacook School/Community Substance Abuse Prevention Committee is considering a several options for sharing informational materials with Maranacook parents, and helping parents support and teach each other ways to help their kids stay safe. The group will continue its

discussion and planning on this topic at the high school, at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, December 15th.
Join the meeting if you want to help, or learn more first hand.