



2010 National Teen Survey Finds: More Than One Quarter of Public School Students Attend Gang- and Drug-Infected Schools

PR Newswire | 19 Aug 2010 | 12:01 AM ET

WASHINGTON, Aug 19, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Public Schools Much Likelier To Be Drug- And Gang-Infected Than Private And Religious Schools 39 Percent Jump In Middle Schoolers Reporting Drugs Used, Kept, Sold On School Grounds Twenty-seven percent of public school students ages 12 to 17 say that their school is both gang- and drug-infected (drugs are used, kept or sold on school grounds), according to the National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XV: Teens and Parents, the 15th annual back-to-school survey conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA*) at Columbia University. This means that 5.7 million public school students attend schools which are both gang- and drug-infected.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080814/NYTH004LOGO>) (Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20080814/NYTH004LOGO>) Compared to teens attending gang- and drug-free schools, teens who attend schools infected with both gangs and drugs are: Five times likelier to use marijuana; Three times likelier to drink; Twelve times likelier to smoke; Three times likelier to be able to get marijuana within an hour or less and five times likelier to get it within a day or less; and Nearly five times likelier to have a friend/classmate who uses illegal drugs like acid, ecstasy, methamphetamine, cocaine or heroin.

The CASA survey also exposes a vast difference between public schools and private and religious schools. It reveals that 46 percent of teens at public schools report that there are gangs in their school, compared to two percent of teens at private and religious schools.

The survey finds that the drug-free-school gap between public schools and private and religious schools is up sharply from its narrowest point in a decade. In the 2001 CASA survey, 62 percent of public school students and 79 percent of private and religious school students said they attended drug-free schools; in this year's survey, 43 percent of public school students and 78 percent of private school students say they attended drug-free schools, widening the drug-free-school gap from 17 points to 35 points.

"The combination of gangs and drugs in a school is a malignant cancer that must be eliminated if we are to be able to improve public education in our nation," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA Founder and Chairman and former U.S.

Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. "It is outrageous for states and localities to require parents to send their children to public schools infected with gangs and drugs. If adults faced gangs and drugs at their factories or offices each day they would protest, call the police, and if that failed, change jobs. Yet parents in many communities are expected to send their children to the same school, day after day, to face the menace of gangs and drugs." The Middle School Mess The CASA survey revealed that one in three middle schoolers say that drugs are used, kept or sold at their school, a 39 percent increase since last year (32 percent in 2010 vs. 23 percent in 2009).

Compared to 12- and 13-year olds in drug-free schools, those in drug-infected schools are: Thirty-three times likelier to have tried tobacco; Seven times likelier to have a friend or classmate who uses illegal drugs like acid, ecstasy, methamphetamine, cocaine or heroin; Five times likelier to know a friend or classmate who abuses prescription drugs; and Almost three times likelier to have tried alcohol.

In the CASA survey, no 12- and 13-year olds in drug-free schools have tried marijuana compared to 10 percent who have tried marijuana in drug-infected schools.

The report also found that 39 percent of 12- and 13-year olds in drug-infected schools can get alcohol in a day or less, and 24 percent can get marijuana in a day or less.

The CASA survey found that 66 percent of high school students said their schools were drug infected, continuing a steady increase in drug-infected high schools since 2006 when 51 percent of high school students said that they attended drug-infected schools.

"This steady increase in the number of 12- to 17-year olds attending drug-infected schools is a trajectory to tragedy for millions of children and families," said Califano. "Placing our youngest teens and pre-teens in an environment where drinking and drugging are common is child abuse by states and localities that are obliged to keep their schools drug free." Family Ties This year the CASA survey took a close look at Family Ties, the bond between parents and their teens, and sought to assess how Family Ties influence the likelihood that a teen will smoke, drink or use illegal drugs. Compared to teens in families with strong Family Ties, teens in families with weak Family Ties are: Four times likelier to try tobacco; Four times likelier to try marijuana; Almost three times likelier to drink; Twice as likely to have a friend/classmate who abuses prescription drugs; and Twice as likely to have a friend/classmate who uses illegal drugs such as acid, ecstasy, methamphetamine, cocaine or heroin.

"This year's survey underscores how critical it is for parents to forge close Family Ties with their children and really know their children's friends," said Kathleen Ferrigno, CASA's Director of Marketing who directs the CASA Family Day-A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children(TM) initiative. "In today's world a parent has no greater tool to help keep their child drug free than communication. Strong Family Ties and in-depth knowledge of a teen's friends are critical components to foster a child's health." Other Key Findings Related to Teen Substance Use When teens that can get marijuana were asked who they would get it from, 76 percent said a friend/classmate; 30 percent said that their parents know the person supplying the marijuana.

Eighty-six percent of parents support social host laws that make it illegal for parents to allow underage children (other than their own) to drink in their home.

Seventy-five percent of teens say that teens they know who drink or use drugs are more likely to engage

in sexual activity.

Compared to teens who say that none of their friends drink regularly, those whose friends drink on a regular basis are 13 times likelier to have tried marijuana.

Teens who have tried tobacco are 12 times likelier to have used marijuana compared to teens who have never tried tobacco.

CASA conducted two concurrent surveys this year. For the first time, CASA used Knowledge Networks to do an Internet-based survey administered to a nationally representative sample of 1,055 teens (540 boys, 515 girls), and 456 of their parents, from April 8 to April 27, 2010. Sampling error is +/- 3.1 for teens and +/- 4.6 for parents. As in the past, CASA used QEV Analytics to do a survey of trend questions at home by telephone which was administered to a nationally representative sample of 1,000 teens (511 boys, 489 girls) from April 6 to April 27, 2010. Sampling error is +/- 3.1.

CASA is the only national organization that brings together under one roof all the professional disciplines needed to study and combat abuse of all substances--alcohol, nicotine, illegal, prescription and performance enhancing drugs--in all sectors of society. Founded in 1992 by former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA and its staff of some 60 professionals aim to inform Americans of the economic and social costs of substance abuse and its impact on their lives, find out what works in prevention and treatment of this disease, and remove the stigma of substance abuse and replace shame and despair with hope.

CASA has issued 72 reports and white papers, published three books, conducted demonstration programs focused on children, families and schools in 36 states and Washington, D.C., held 19 conferences, and has been evaluating drug and alcohol treatment and prevention programs to determine what works best for what individuals. CASA is the creator of the nationwide initiative Family Day--A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children(TM) - the fourth Monday in September--the 27th in 2010--that promotes parental engagement as a simple and effective way to reduce children's risk of smoking, drinking and using illegal drugs. The most recent CASA book, How To Raise a Drug Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents by Joseph A. Califano, Jr., a practical, user friendly book of advice and information for parents, is widely available in paperback. For more information visit www.casacolumbia.org *The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University is neither affiliated with, nor sponsored by, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (also known as "CASA") or any of its member organizations, or any other organizations with the name of "CASA".

Available Topic Expert(s): For information on the listed expert(s), click appropriate link.

Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

<https://profnetwork.com/Subscriber/ExpertProfile.aspx?ei=44849> SOURCE The National Center on Addiction & Substance Abuse www.prnewswire.com Copyright (C) 2010 PR Newswire. All rights reserved - O- KEYWORD: District of Columbia INDUSTRY KEYWORD: EDU SUBJECT CODE: POL

CHI

SVY

URL: <http://www.cnbc.com/id/38765313/>

© 2010 CNBC.com