In 2019, Healthcare Foundation of La Porte (HFL) launched Partners in Prevention (PiP), a three-year grant initiative to help La Porte County schools identify, implement, and sustain proven substance use prevention programs. All schools in La Porte County (accredited, K-12 public, parochial, and private schools) were invited to apply for grant funding to develop a sustainable framework for school-based prevention of substance use. HFL invested $2.6 million for planning, implementation, technical assistance to the schools, and an evaluation of outcomes. 2023 marks the release of the full evaluation report, key findings, outcomes, and recommendations for sustainability.

**TOTAL INVESTED**

$2.6M

**HEALTHY MINDS INITIATIVE**

- **11** GRANTEES
- **13,000+** STUDENTS REACHED
- **12** SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- **26** ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- **363** TEACHERS

These proven programs equipped La Porte County students with skills that not only help them avoid drugs but also help improve their academic achievement, attendance, classroom behavior, and social and emotional well-being, and reduce bullying.

**Student Outcomes from PiP**

- Increased perceived risk of substance use.
- Decreased favorable attitudes toward substance use, intention to use, and susceptibility to peer influence.
- Improved social emotional skills. (Increase in healthy interactions, and decreases in violent and other unhealthy interactions with others including parents, teachers, peers, romantic partners, and employers).
- Reduced initiation of substance use among students.
- Decreased substance use among students already using.
- Improved academic outcomes (grades, graduation rates, standardized test scores).
- Reduced school disciplinary issues (absences, suspensions, expulsions).
- Improved classroom climate.
- Embedded programs in schools and school culture.

HFL worked with RTI International to examine the nature and quality of program implementation and to evaluate the outcomes of Partners in Prevention programs for students, teachers, and schools. This work aimed to help improve implementation quality, help stakeholders understand trends in outcomes, and inform future initiatives. HFL contracted the Education Development Center (EDC) to provide implementation technical assistance (TA) to Partners in Prevention grantees.

**TIMELINE**

- **2017**
  - La Porte County Opioid Study
  - Recommendations: Implement proven school-based life skills and substance abuse prevention programs

- **2018**
  - MODEL: Prevention Matters from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation

- **2019**
  - Partners in Prevention Launched
  - EDC and RTI engaged
  - Planning grants awarded to La Porte County School
  - July/August: Schools & corporation planning grants focused on analyzing student needs, selecting evidence-based program(s) and outcome measures, and creating work plans
  - September: Implementation began
  - Grantees began training implementers and building implementation teams
  - EDC Webinar: Data Collection & Analyzing

- **2020**
  - Schools & corporations continued program implementation
  - Work plans focused on using logic models, curriculum implementation with fidelity, implementer training, outcome measures, and quality improvement
  - EDC Webinar: Monitoring Implementation and Fidelity
  - EDC Webinar: Monitoring Program Implementation & Adapting Program to Student Needs

- **2021**
  - Schools & districts continued program implementation
  - EDC monitored status of using logic models and work plans
  - EDC Webinar: Implementation Science
  - EDC Webinar: Lessons Learned from Y2020
  - Schools’ & districts’ work plans focused on outcome measurement, sustainability, and stakeholder & family engagement
  - EDC Webinar: Integration of Prevention & Social Emotional Learning into Academics
  - Partners in Prevention Phase 1 completed
  - Next steps TBD

- **2022**
  - Schools & districts continued program implementation
  - EDC monitored status of using logic models and work plans
  - EDC Webinar: Implementation Science
  - EDC Webinar: Lessons Learned from Y2020
  - Schools’ & districts’ work plans focused on outcome measurement, sustainability, and stakeholder & family engagement
  - EDC Webinar: Integration of Prevention & Social Emotional Learning into Academics
  - Partners in Prevention Phase 1 completed
  - Next steps TBD
The most commonly implemented programs were Second Step and Botvin LifeSkills Training.

### Programs By School & Grade

The most commonly implemented programs were Second Step and Botvin LifeSkills Training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Total Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Number of Secondary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botvin LifeSkills Training</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious Discipline</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Action</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripple Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Step: Elementary &amp; Middle</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Connect</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Good for Drugs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Good for Violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quality of Implementation

- **68%** Grant directors reported that teachers followed the curriculum guide “very closely” for 16 of the 19 programs.
- **42%** of teachers reported following the curriculum guide “very closely”.
- **6%** of teachers reported not using the curriculum guide.
- **2%** of teachers reported not following the curriculum guide closely and frequently changed the material.
- **50%** of teachers reported following the curriculum guide “somewhat closely” and adapting materials as appropriate.
- **92%** Year 3, **89%** Year 2

In total, 92% of teachers “very closely” or “somewhat closely” followed the curriculum guide in Year 3, compared with 89% in Year 2.
**IMPACT**

Evidence-based prevention programs delivered through the PiP initiative have resulted in building skills that have proven to prevent substance use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Climate Dimension (subscale)</th>
<th>Sample Item</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
<th>YEAR 3</th>
<th>YEAR 1 VS. YEAR 3 Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student satisfaction</td>
<td>Students are happy with the class</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer relations</td>
<td>All students in the class get along well with each other</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom difficulty</td>
<td>Only the brightest students can do all the work</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

**How Did Student Behaviors Change?**

- Grade retention
- Excused absences
- Unexcused absences
- In-school suspensions
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Expulsions

On average, teachers rated the benefit of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Programming to students at 85% and any substance use prevention program at 75%, each 3% higher than the year prior.

> **DURING OUR BOTVIN LESSONS, STUDENTS OPENED UP AND JOINED THE DISCUSSIONS AND SHARED SOME OF THEIR OWN PERSONAL STORIES. SOME STUDENTS WHO TENDED TO BE MORE ON THE SHY OR RESERVED SIDE BECAME MORE ANIMATED DURING LIVELY TOPICS OF DISCUSSION.**

— Teacher, Tri-Township Consolidated School Corporation
Partners in Prevention helped students develop needed life skills to protect against substance use and misuse.

The most significant impact of PiP programming since the project's inception as identified by teachers included the program's positive impact on empathy, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Also, a number of teachers commented that the program created time for reflection and helped students to learn about themselves and gain awareness of their emotions.

General Findings:

**6th-12th Graders Perceived Risk of Harm**
- **Year 1:** 1.7
- **Year 2:** 1.7
- **Year 3:** 1.7

**7th-12th Graders Perceived Wrongness of Substance Abuse**
- **Year 1:** 2.5
- **Year 2:** 2.4
- **Year 3:** 2.5

Note: Sixth-graders did not report on favorable attitudes toward substance abuse.

**Changes in Student Disapproval of Substance Use from Pretest to Posttest Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 (N = 3 Schools)</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 (N = 3 Schools)</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 (N = 7 Schools)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from the 2022 Indiana Youth Survey La Porte County Youth

---

"I LOVE THE 6TH GRADERS’ HONESTY, QUESTIONS, AND SHARING DURING OUR BOTVIN LIFESKILLS TIME. THEY WERE VERY ENGAGED DURING THE SMOKING INFORMATION AND ADVERTISING LESSON. STUDENTS SEEM AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF SMOKING AND SHARED HOW CONCERNED THEY ARE FOR RELATIVES WHO SMOKE. WE HAD A LIVELY DISCUSSION ON WHERE THEY SEE ADVERTISING AND WHAT THE ADVERTISING IS TRYING TO DO."

— Teacher, Michigan City Area Schools
Continually train new teachers to mitigate for staff turnover and offer a variety of teaching styles.

Select teachers who are excited about the curriculum and have an engaging nature.

Build multi-disciplinary implementation teams (school leaders, counselors, social workers, teachers, data collectors, students, etc.).

Select grant directors/project coordinators based upon skills in action planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

Ensure that curriculum is delivered with fidelity.

Vary curriculum delivery, including interactive strategies, to elevate positive outcomes.

Select grant directors/project coordinators based upon skills in action planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

Institutionalize prevention and social emotional learning programming.

Embed programs in all content areas using common language to reinforce lessons.

I HAVE HEARD MANY STUDENTS NAMING THEIR EMOTIONS IN OUR SCHOOL, AND I THINK SECOND STEP IS REALLY CONTRIBUTING TO THAT. WE REALLY LOVE THE PROGRAM!”
— Teacher, St. John’s Lutheran School

Recommendations from RTI International (PiP Evaluator)

1. Establish structures to train and coach new and current teachers.
2. Build time into annual calendars for training, planning, and implementation.
3. Protect time for lesson planning and delivery.
4. Provide teachers with student engagement strategies.
5. Offer forums for teachers to share lessons learned and successes.
6. Integrate the prevention/SEL program into schools’ multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).
7. Use data to direct focused interventions for students who may need additional SEL support.
8. Continuously examine implementation and outcome data to refine approaches.
9. Share results and success stories with key stakeholders internal and external to the school system.
10. Create stable long-term budget supports.
11. Dedicate a role in the school to ongoing program monitoring and evaluation to maintain accountability and fidelity.

Key Recommendations from Grant Directors

1. Guarantee a significant planning phase for success of implementation.
2. Involve key staff in initial decision-making in the planning phase.
3. Identify staff and teachers who are committed to the programs.
4. Secure buy-in from school leadership, teachers, and other stakeholders.
FINDINGS FROM THE 2022 INDIANA YOUTH SURVEY (INYS)

During the past 12 months did you ever feel so sad and hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row? Rates of depression were largely unchanged across all three years.

CRAFFT: A substance use screening that indicates the percentage of students in our community who are at greater risk of developing alcohol- or drug-related disorders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE IN YEARS</th>
<th>CRAFFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 1 Positive responses</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+ Positive responses*</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2+ Positive responses indicates high risk.

Depressive Symptoms, Students in Grades 6-12

- YEAR 1: 34.7%
- YEAR 2: 37.7%
- YEAR 3: 35.1%

OUR PROGRAM, TOO GOOD FOR DRUGS, WAS VERY ENGAGING AND WELL ROUNDED. IT COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS AND SKILLS THAT WILL PREPARE THE STUDENTS FOR REAL LIFE ISSUES LIKE SUBSTANCE ABUSE."
— Teacher, South Central Community School Corporation

SUSTAINABILITY

100% of grantees continued delivering PiP in 2023

Key Elements of Sustainability

- Acquire financial commitment from school administration and apply for state/federal grants.
- Embed programs into school culture and academics.
- Purchase multi-year curriculum licenses and materials when extra funding is available.
- Prepare to train new teachers to deliver programming as staff changes.
- Secure and maintain buy-in from students, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders.
- Use common program language through the school/system.

A SIBLING GROUP OF BROTHERS HAVE ALL BENEFITED THROUGH NOT ONLY SECOND STEP LESSONS BUT CLASSROOM COUNSELING, ALLOWING THEM TO DEVELOP STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER AND THEIR FAMILY."
— Teacher, La Porte Community School Corporation

CELEBRATE!

The need for prevention and social-emotional programming for elementary through high school is great! School-based prevention programs play a pivotal role in reducing substance use. This timely Partners in Prevention initiative enabled 11 grantees to establish vital, evidence-based programs for current and future students in La Porte County, Indiana.

AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST-TIME USE

- CIGARETTES: 12.23
- VAPING: 13.22
- ALCOHOL: 12.45
- MARIJUANA: 13.11
- INHALANTS: 12.61
- Rx NOT PRESCRIBED: 12.42

Nineteen programs were implemented across all grantees in Year 3. In January, grant directors reported plans to continue 12 of the programs (63%), and five (26%) reported ‘maybe’ will continue same program.

Two (11%) reported that they would not continue same program but planned to deliver another evidence-based prevention program.

The need for prevention and social-emotional programming for elementary through high school is great! School-based prevention programs play a pivotal role in reducing substance use. This timely Partners in Prevention initiative enabled 11 grantees to establish vital, evidence-based programs for current and future students in La Porte County, Indiana.

CELEBRATE!

The need for prevention and social-emotional programming for elementary through high school is great! School-based prevention programs play a pivotal role in reducing substance use. This timely Partners in Prevention initiative enabled 11 grantees to establish vital, evidence-based programs for current and future students in La Porte County, Indiana.

AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST-TIME USE

- CIGARETTES: 12.23
- VAPING: 13.22
- ALCOHOL: 12.45
- MARIJUANA: 13.11
- INHALANTS: 12.61
- Rx NOT PRESCRIBED: 12.42

Nineteen programs were implemented across all grantees in Year 3. In January, grant directors reported plans to continue 12 of the programs (63%), and five (26%) reported ‘maybe’ will continue same program.

Two (11%) reported that they would not continue same program but planned to deliver another evidence-based prevention program.