Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley
Joint Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Task Force
Report and Recommendations

Introduction
Substance use and abuse is related to high-risk behaviors such as binge drinking, drinking and driving, violence, engaging in unprotected sex, and other negative behaviors that can ultimately lead to death. The use of alcohol and marijuana also impacts school performance, which compromises the opportunities for students to have healthy and successful adult lives. Unfortunately, this growing problem is one that BUSD and the City share with other cities in Alameda County, the state, and the nation.

The Berkeley community and the School Board were disturbed by the reported data from the 2008 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). The data indicate that the rate at which Berkeley students use alcohol and marijuana is higher than the state and nation averages.

With direction and support from Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) and the City of Berkeley (COB), the district’s Director of Student Services and the City of Berkeley’s Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Coordinator organized and convened the Joint Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Task Force. The group includes school, city and county staff, parents, law enforcement officials, faith-based community representatives, ATOD providers and other stakeholders in Berkeley. The Joint ATOD Task Force developed a problem and mission statement and a work plan that includes seven ATOD prevention goals that align with recommendations in the school district’s Plan to Close the Achievement Gap, the city’s AOD 5-year work plan, and the 2020 Vision Initiative.

Problem Statement
The fact that little attention has been focused on ATOD youth prevention in the school district and in the city and that most of the services during the past 20 to 30 years have been provided to adult ATOD treatment has left a major service gap. The Joint ATOD Task Force wants to increase awareness and highlight the high levels of alcohol and marijuana use and abuse by Berkeley students and youth. The Task Force also wants to emphasize the negative impact that these drugs have on youth development and academic performance in order to advocate for the necessary ATOD prevention services needed for students and youth in Berkeley.
The group developed the following problem statement to direct the Joint ATOD Task Force efforts:

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs continue to be key concerns for Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley. Substance use and abuse have been identified by the School District, city staff, and the community as significant factors that affect academic success for all students. The results in the 2008 California Healthy School Survey reported that BUSD middle and high school students have higher rates of alcohol and marijuana use as compared to the state and the nation. It is also a known fact that substance abuse harms more than just the user; it has devastating effects on the family and the entire community.

Some residents believe that youth are purchasing cannabis from medical marijuana cardholders. It is also assumed that cannabis clubs make access to marijuana easier and cheaper for students and youth to purchase and use.

It has taken some time for Berkeley Unified School District and the City to agree upon an approach in order to work collaboratively on youth ATOD problems. Another concern is that the school district doesn’t currently have a truancy program in place. Therefore, the Berkeley Police Department (BPD) and the school district have had a difficult time addressing truancy and other risky behaviors by students in Berkeley.

Berkeley Unified School District’s results in the 2008 CHKS self-administered student tool indicates, the degree to which youth use and abuse ATOD. Below are Berkeley Unified School District’s Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Summary:

- ATOD use increases from grades 5 to 11
- Twice as many graders reported being high on drugs compared to the state
- At grades 9 and 11, BUSD had twice as many reports of students being drunk or high on school property than the state and the nation
- BUSD reported higher consumption of alcohol than the state and the nation (except at grade 5)
- Despite significant progress over the past ten years in reducing overall tobacco use in Berkeley, there appears to be an upward trend in all grade levels in the use of tobacco as reported in the 2008 CHKS
- BUSD rates of marijuana use in the last 30 days are twice that of the state and the nation.
Current Situation

Alcohol and marijuana use is more prevalent among youth than the use of all other drugs combined. The over-concentration of alcohol outlets in certain districts increases accessibility of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for Berkeley youth and University students. A comment from a survey in the Taking the Lead Report states, “In the downtown area, large numbers of high school-age youth are using marijuana in alleys, and other ‘out of the way’ places in the morning, lunchtime, and mid-afternoon.”

Berkeley High School (BHS) has an open campus policy; therefore, students are able to come and go with limited restrictions. BHS is located in the downtown area across the street from Civic Center Park, an outpatient drug treatment program, men’s homeless shelter and drop-in center. The park is frequented by many of Berkeley’s homeless residents, some of whom have been banned from the treatment program, shelter, and drop-in center. During the daily school lunch break, numerous students go across the street to Civic Center Park and indulge in ATOD use and other negative behaviors.

Due to limited police monitoring, school security and availability of other school staff during BHS lunch breaks, students find it easy to “get high” while on lunch break in Civic Center Park. The 2008 CHKS documented that there is high use of ATOD on school property in Berkeley and unfortunately the school is extremely limited with ATOD prevention and intervention services and programs for students.

A city-wide coalition effort is needed to help decrease and eventually eliminate use of alcohol and other drugs in Civic Center Park, schools, and other public areas in the Berkeley community. With this in mind, the Joint ATOD Task Force created this mission:

“To identify, develop and implement Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) prevention and intervention programs and services, including evidenced-based curricula, environmental prevention, and youth development strategies, which increase awareness and reduce use and abuse of ATOD among youth in our community.”

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1 Berkeley Taking the Lead in Combating Alcohol and Other Drugs, 2006
Background

The factors that contribute to alcohol and other drug use and abuse in Berkeley can easily be aligned with the city’s history. Berkeley has a reputation that is closely tied to active drug use and abuse. The Telegraph Area Association stated in 2003: “Telegraph [Avenue] is often romanticized and promoted as a ‘user culture’ by the media and others.”

Because of this perceived “user culture,” the City of Berkeley AOD Coordinator has helped to change the social norms of how AOD disorders are viewed by addressing it as a major critical public health problem. This position has been used over the years to strategically address AOD in the entire city. As a result, AOD service needs of the public and private sectors of the community have become far more visible and collaborative. It is through the collaboration of this position with school district personnel that AOD problems with students have been highlighted.

Due to the alarming results from the 2008 CHKS, the school board directed staff to coordinate with city staff and to organize a group of stakeholders from various sectors within the city in order to develop a joint ATOD prevention work plan that would focus on use and abuse by students and youth in Berkeley. In the fall of 2009, Berkeley Unified School District’s (BUSD) Director of Student Services and the City of Berkeley’s (COB) Alcohol and Other Drugs Coordinator, as the Project Leads, assembled staff from BUSD, COB, Alameda County, and CBOs along with parents, and other stakeholders and formed the Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley Joint Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Task Force.

The following recommendations and strategies were developed by work groups under the jurisdiction of the overall Joint ATOD Task Force and with input and approval of the Task Force for all recommendations. The report also outlines the Joint ATOD Task Force justification for making the recommendations in this report.

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Recommendation # 1
Mandate the use of effective evidence-based ATOD prevention and intervention programs and services for youth in Berkeley’s schools and communities.

There are numerous advantages to adopting and implementing evidence-based programs. Developing a shared focus on youth education and substance abuse that also includes linking parental support, environmental prevention, and the entire community is important, if youth are to be academically successful.

One source states that the importance of using science-based programs for children and adolescents is well documented. School bonding and achievement are directly related, and the ability to engage in school activities, pursue educational aspirations, and form social bonds with peers and teachers are critical in taking pride in academic accomplishments and mastering fundamental learning skills (Tolan et al., 2001).

The benefits for BUSD and the city in using evidence-based programs is their proven effectiveness in reducing ATOD use and abuse with youth in school settings and because they are more likely than other programs to have undergone analyses on their costs.

Strategies
- The School Board approves the recommendations in this report from the Joint ATOD Task Force.
- The school district hires and/or assigns staff to assist with the recommendations in this report, identifying an ATOD Coordinator who will oversee all aspects of ATOD services for the school district and coordinate with city staff.

Outcome: BUSD School Board and the City of Berkeley will implement evidence-based ATOD prevention and intervention programs and services for youth in Berkeley’s schools and communities.

Implementation Timeline: As identified in each recommendation
Fiscal Impact: Unknown

Recommendation # 2
Adopt and implement evidence-based approaches and models that were identified during the comprehensive assessment of ATOD prevention and intervention programs, services, and resources that was conducted by the Joint ATOD Task Force (See appendix C).
The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) notes that School-Based Prevention decreases drug use. According to NIDA, a new study provides compelling evidence that interventions made with students help prevent drug use and other behavioral problems.3

The 2006-2009 Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs Report recommends that prevention programming be comprehensive, addressing multiple levels of prevention initiatives, including (1) information dissemination to the community, (2) education programming for classrooms, parents, and the community, and (3) environmental initiatives such as assessing and modifying local attitudes and beliefs related to substance use and abuse.

Berkeley lacks resources, programs, and services that address ATOD prevention for youth. Alameda County Office of Behavioral Health Care Services offers a limited number of youth-focused prevention services. It is important that BUSD and the City invest in securing ATOD prevention services in order to decrease substance use and abuse by students and youth in Berkeley.

**Strategies**

- Implement a system-wide ATOD approach of Prevention, Intervention and Universal Strategies on three different levels:
  - Tier I: system-wide supports
  - Tier II: early and specialized interventions
  - Tier III: includes intensive interventions and treatment
- Review recommended evidence-based ATOD models, such as:
  - Project Success: high school and middle schools
  - Up Front: Berkeley Technology Academy.
  - Project Alert: taught by science teachers in middle schools*
  - Too Good for Drugs: middle schools*
  - Project Towards No Drug Abuse: taught as part of Life Skills Classes in high schools*
  *Curriculum below is lecture-based and is not effective as a stand alone.
- Design a comprehensive model of ATOD Service Delivery:
  All services must include program evaluations, multi-system accountability, family and community engagement, be youth-focused and evidenced-based.

**Outcome:** BUSD school board and the City will implement ATOD models and approaches that link schools and the community, fostering cross agency collaboration and coordination and developing students feelings of “connection” to schools

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3 Join Together, Advancing Effective Alcohol and Drug Policy, Prevention, and Treatment
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Implementation Timeline: January 31, 2011
Fiscal Impact: $150,000 annually

Recommendation # 3:
Implement ATOD prevention and intervention curriculum, programs, and services at all Berkeley middle schools as a top priority.

Schools should provide a caring environment with high expectations of students and emphasizing prevention of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use and abuse at school, home, and in the community. Middle school is the single most important time and place to help youth attain the necessary skills to make good decisions about alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs.

The resource Getting Results reported that schools should use a science-based curriculum that has already demonstrated effectiveness in preventing substance abuse. Project ALERT, the curriculum currently assigned for use in BUSD middle schools, is a program listed in the Getting Results report as being effective in delaying the initiation of marijuana use for 6th to 8th graders. However, there has been no accountability to ensure that it is being used in all middle school science classes.

Strategies
- BUSD will select an ATOD prevention program for middle schools in order to reduce substance use. BUSD will initiate an adoption process, including teachers, and administrators, in order to select a curriculum to recommend to the Board for adoption. Programs to be considered include:
  - Project SUCCESS (Schools Using Coordinated Community Efforts to Strengthen Students) to be used in the middle schools as a model/approach for providing services
  - “Too Good for Drugs” to be used as a model/approach in the middle and elementary schools.

Outcome: BUSD School District and the City will adopt the recommendation and implement Project SUCCESS, Too Good for Drugs, or another evidence-based program and ATOD services in all Berkeley middle schools.

Implementation Timeline: January 31, 2011
Fiscal Impact: $75,000 annually

Recommendation # 4:
Train teachers and staff to observe and identify adolescent ATOD use and abuse in order to enhance a student’s ability to be academically successful.
Throughout the country, school districts are realizing the importance of teachers who have sufficient knowledge about ATOD use and abuse. Some schools are mandating that staff attend pre-service and in-service training programs for school personnel on ATOD use and abuse, prevention strategies, and the effects and legal consequences of the possession and use of ATOD products.

The State of Vermont’s Department of Education reported that recent legislation (legislation H.711) made a significant impact on the Safe & Healthy Schools Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Prevention Education. This Education Law is a requirement for school staff training about drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention.

The implementation of on-going ATOD training for BUSD teachers, faculty, and all staff, including city staffs that provide service to students and youth, will decrease health and safety issues related to ATOD use on school property. Having school personnel trained in ATOD prevention will ultimately improve student academic performance in schools.

**Strategies**

- BUSD and COB train staff to decrease stigmatizing and stereotyping of ATOD use
- BUSD and COB train staff to improve the school environment with a particular focus on high school

**Short-Term Objective:**

- Key positions shall receive an initial ATOD Education Training & Orientation by December 31, 2010:
  - BUSD Management Team which includes, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals, vice principals, and other identified staff
  - Campus security officers at all secondary schools, guidance counselors, OCI staff and Health Center staff
  - COB staff
  - B-Tech teachers, BHS teachers and instructional aides

- All identified key positions will receive an additional ATOD Education and Training Seminar by June 30, 2011 and thereafter, all key positions will receive training on an annual basis
- Identified high school students will be trained, so that they can prepare to become peer educators.

**Outcome:** Identified BUSD and COB staff will be trained about ATOD, in order to help reduce substance use and abuse and increase academic performance of students.

**Implementation Timeline:** By June 30, 2011.

**Fiscal Impact:** $10,000 annually
Recommendation # 5: Collaborate with Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition in order to develop ATOD environmental prevention strategies that focus on social norm changes for youth in Berkeley.

According to The National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute, which provides support throughout the United States to help build coalitions with environmental prevention strategists, environmental strategies are necessary in order to change or influence community conditions, standards, and policies. These environmental strategies offer well-accepted prevention approaches to change the environments where substance use and abuse occur.

It is a fact that communities who succeed with environmental prevention do so because of the involvement of government agencies, law enforcement officials, school personnel, healthcare providers, residents, and other stakeholders.

Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition is an outgrowth of the Joint ATOD Task Force and comprised of school and city personnel, parents, law enforcement, AOD providers, and other community stakeholders. We believe this group represents the necessary composition of individuals to be successful in addressing and implementing some of the environmental strategies that it will take to change the social norms around ATOD in Berkeley.

Strategies

- Empower the newly formed Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition to take responsibility for Goal 6, which is to develop ATOD environmental prevention strategies that focus on social norm changes for youth and the community
- Begin with a specific focus on Civic Center Park for ongoing efforts to alleviate ATOD problems among the Berkeley High School students and other youth in Berkeley who frequent the park
- Collaborate with experienced tobacco prevention programs
- Focus on teens and adults
- Increase additional positive activities for youth.

Outcome: BUSD School Board and the City will collaborate with Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition to develop social norm changes for youth in Berkeley’s schools and communities.

Implementation Timeline: July 15, 2010

Fiscal Impact: Unknown
Recommendation #6:
Develop and implement effective alternative programs and services to address truancy problems, particularly as they are connected with ATOD, within the school district and the City of Berkeley.

Preventing truancy protects precious public resources in the midst of California's worst economic crisis. The crimes that high school dropouts commit cost the state $1.1 billion per year, according to the UC Santa Barbara California Dropout Research Project. Adding in the social and medical costs and wage taxes and associated economic losses, the report estimates that dropouts cost the state more than $24 billion a year.4

Truancy can be related to legal issues, economic hardship, substance abuse, and sometimes lack of adequate parental involvement with youth. Despite a young person’s situation, unstructured time outside of school provides increased opportunities for youth to get into serious trouble.

BUSD has a responsibility to ensure that students gain the necessary tools for a successful adult life; otherwise, we perpetuate the cycle of academic failure and poverty.

Strategies
Develop a BUSD/COB Plan to eliminate truancy that includes these components:

- Improve data collection to identify “high-risk” students in all grades
- Include a BUSD/COB ATOD Task Force representative on the SARB (and SART, if possible) to assist in coordination of services and with earlier responses and interventions
- Implement the Student Attendance Review Team (SART)/Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) processes for early detection of students missing school. Resources needed to implement the SART/SARB should be provided and a focus on ATOD is important to keep in mind, especially with grades 6 to 12
- Invest in the Universal Learning Support System (ULSS). Specific language should be added with an emphasis on family support for ATOD-related issues. Focus on grades K-8, when issues of attendance need to consistently be a part of ULSS team screening and follow-up by:
  - Referring to ULSS teams in SART process guidelines and consultations
  - Including attendance emphasis in ULSS process trainings and consultations.

4 Truancy Costs Us All; By Kamala Harris, San Francisco Chronicle, October 14, 2009
Transform discipline systems by implementing positive behavior systems for all grades, such as:

- Support Building Effective Schools together (B.E.S.T) at each school in order to change the patterns of suspensions, expulsions, and office referrals for behavior
- Reduce suspensions and create alternatives to suspensions at secondary schools by developing and implementing intervention strategies
- Keep students on campus
- Address the current racial problems that exist in schools
- Focus on ATOD as one of the obstacles to student success and develop and implement a variety of interventions to address the obstacles
- Strengthen the transformation of the discipline systems and address racial inequities.

**Outcome:** BUSD School District and the City will support the development of a plan to reduce and eliminate Truancy in BUSD.

**Implementation Timeline:** March 1, 2011

**Fiscal Impact:** No additional cost, if current staff is assigned, i.e. the Student Attendance and Welfare Specialist and Safety Officers

**Recommendation # 7:**

Identify funding sources in order to implement ATOD prevention, intervention, and treatment services within BUSD and the City of Berkeley.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that a priority for the President for fiscal year 2011 is the creation of a National, Community-Based Prevention System to protect our adolescents; spending is set to be $22.6 million.

From a fiscal perspective, the adoption and implementation of evidence-based programs can help the school district and the City of Berkeley obtain and sustain program funding. Funders increasingly want to invest their money in programs that have scientifically demonstrated their effectiveness. The public also wants to know that tax dollars are being spent on programs and services that actually work.

**Strategies**

- The focus is on strengthening the Coalition, environmental prevention strategies and sustaining services in order to change ATOD social norms in Berkeley
- Coalition efforts are ongoing to identify and attempt to obtain ATOD prevention funding
Efforts focus on matching funds, reallocation and leveraging of internal and external funding, for example the Drug Free Communities grant was submitted in March 2010, in order to support the Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition work.

**Outcome:** BUSD School Board and the City of Berkeley assign staff to identify funding in order to implement ATOD services.

**Implementation Timeline:** ongoing

**Fiscal Impact:** Unknown

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**Future Actions**

The ATOD Task Force has agreed to continue to meet on an ongoing basis to ensure that substance abuse prevention and interventions programs and services are developed, implemented, and monitored in order to support students, teachers, families, and the community in reducing the use and abuse of ATOD in Berkeley.

It is strongly recommended that the school district and the city adopt the proposed recommendations and invest funding and staffing in ATOD prevention and intervention services and resources for students and youth. These strategies must include support to community-based environmental prevention that will affect change in the environment, public policies, and social norms regarding ATOD prevention for youth and the community-at-large.

The Joint ATOD Task Force believes that with appropriate staffing, funding, monitoring, and evaluation the recommended ATOD strategies will provide positive and measurable outcomes for BUSD students, youth, and the entire Berkeley community.
Acknowledgments
The Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who assisted in the production of this report. Special thanks go to all the members of the Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley Joint ATOD Task Force. Without their assistance, hard work, and support, we could not have successfully completed this report.
Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley
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References


Harris, Kamala. (2009, October 14). Truancy costs us all. The San Francisco Chronicle.


The City of Berkeley Taking the Lead in Combating Alcohol and Other Drugs, June 2006.

The Legal and Economic Implications of Truancy: Executive Summary National Center for School Engagement, September 2005.
Appendix

A

Glossary of Terms
Appendix

B

Youth Services and Treatment Services in Berkeley and Alameda County for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
Appendix

C

Prevention, Intervention, and Universal Strategies
Appendix

D

Developmental Assets Approach
Appendix

F

Evidenced-Based Programs That Work
Appendix

E

Berkeley Unified School District Truancy Program
Appendix

G

Project Success
BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: William Huyett, Superintendent  
FROM: Neil Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
        Felton Owens, Director of Student Services  
DATE: June 23, 2010  
SUBJECT: Plan to Address Use and Abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
The Berkeley School Board and the community were disturbed by the reported data from the 2008 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). The data indicated the high rate at which Berkeley students self-reported their use of alcohol and marijuana compared to state and national figures.

With direction from the School Board to address the problems associated with youth and alcohol and other drugs, District staff collaborated with City officials to form the Joint ATOD Task Force, which developed a work plan that identified seven ATOD prevention goals.

The Task Force began by defining the problem: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs continue to be a key concern for Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley. Substance use and abuse have been identified by the School District and City staff and the community as a significant factor that affects academic success for all students. The California Healthy School Survey 2008 reported that BUSD middle and high school students have higher rates of alcohol and marijuana use as compared to the state and nation. It is also a known fact that substance abuse harms more than just the user; it has disastrous effects on the family and the entire community.

In the fall of 2009, BUSD’s Director of Student Services and the City of Berkeley’s (COB) Alcohol and Other Drugs Coordinator, as the Project Leads, assembled staff from BUSD, COB, Alameda County, community based organizations, parents and other stakeholders, in order to form the Joint Berkeley Unified School District and the City of Berkeley Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Task Force.

The Joint ATOD Task Force was convened in November 2009. Members of the group met monthly and also participated in selected subcommittees in order to develop a comprehensive plan. The Joint ATOD Task Force identified prevention issues after reviewing the District’s Plan to Close the Achievement Gap, the City’s AOD 5-year work plan, and the 2020 Vision goals. The Task Force report focuses on seven ATOD prevention and intervention recommendations and strategies for implementation, which are outlined below.
and explained in full in the report which is attached. The appendices to the report are being provided to the Board under separate cover.

Recommendations
1. Mandate the use of effective evidence-based ATOD prevention and intervention programs and services for youth in Berkeley’s schools and communities.

2. Adopt and implement evidence-based approaches and models that were identified during the comprehensive assessment of ATOD prevention and intervention programs, services, and resources that was conducted by the Joint ATOD Task Force.

3. Implement ATOD prevention and intervention curriculum, programs, and services at all Berkeley middle schools as a top priority.

4. Train teachers and staff to observe and identify adolescent ATOD use and abuse in order to enhance a student’s ability to be academically successful.

5. Collaborate with the Berkeley ATOD Prevention Coalition in order to develop and implement ATOD environmental prevention strategies that focus on social norm changes for youth and the community-at-large.

6. Develop and implement effective alternate programs and services to address truancy problems, particularly as they are connected with ATOD, within the school district and the City of Berkeley.

7. Identify funding sources in order to implement ATOD prevention, intervention, and treatment services within BUSD and the City of Berkeley.

The Task Force believes that the recommendations and strategies outlined in the report will result in a dramatic reduction in the use and abuse of ATOD among young people in Berkeley schools and the community.

POLICY/ CODE
Board Policy 5131.6

FISCAL IMPACT
The Plan has implications for funding that have not been fully determined at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Approve the Plan to Address Use and Abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD)