



**RICHARD M.
FAIRBANKS
FOUNDATION**

Prevention Matters:
**Update on Evidence-Based Substance Use
Prevention Program Implementation
in Marion County K-12 Schools**

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Addressing Opioid Use Disorder

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About the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation

- The Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation strives to advance the vitality of Indianapolis and the well-being of its people by addressing the city's most significant challenges and opportunities.
- The Foundation is focused on five issue-areas across three focus areas:
 - Education**
 - improving academic outcomes for Indianapolis students
 - minimizing underemployment and the workforce skills gap in Indianapolis
 - Health**
 - reducing tobacco use and eliminating youth nicotine use
 - preventing and addressing substance use disorder
 - Vitality of Indianapolis**
 - supporting key economic drivers of the city
- Three-pronged approach: grantmaking, research and evaluation, convenings and collaborations. Learn more at www.rmff.org.



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One of the Foundation's prior Health funding priorities was to address opioid use disorder

- From 2015 through 2019, one of our two funding priorities in Health was to reduce the rate of opioid use disorder (OUD).
- When we adopted this priority, our key question was: *where do we focus our philanthropic resources?*
- In 2020, we expanded our focus from OUD to substance use disorder more broadly.



Our initial work began with understanding OUD and potential approaches to addressing it

- **December 2015:** commissioned study on opioid use disorder from the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health at IUPUI
- **September 2016:** “The Opioid Epidemic in Indiana and Marion County” was released and identified three approaches to combatting opioid use disorder:
 - Treatment
 - Harm Reduction
 - Prevention
- **Prevention was identified as a significant gap since there was considerable work in the areas of expanding access to treatment and harm reduction**



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Substance misuse can start in middle school; school-based prevention programs are a critical tool

- School-based prevention programs have shown to meaningfully reduce short- and long-term substance use and misuse.
- These programs equip students with skills that help them avoid drugs and alcohol.
- They can also help improve attendance, classroom behavior, social and emotional well-being, and academic performance.
- Programs can also help reduce bullying and violence.



To be effective, prevention programs must be evidenced-based

Evidence-based drug prevention programs share several common characteristics:

- Curriculum-based and taught during school hours
- Teach decision-making, communications, self-regulation and other skills
- Take place over multiple classroom sessions throughout the year – not a one-time presentation
- Are designed to reduce use of a variety of drugs
- May be universal (all students) or targeted (students with high risk)



We surveyed Marion County K-12 schools; only 11% were implementing evidence-based prevention programs

Surveyed Marion County K-12 schools in Fall 2017

- Only 11% of schools had an evidence-based prevention curriculum
- The remainder had a program that was not evidence-based or had no program at all

Barriers identified in implementing an evidence-based drug prevention program included:

- Lack of information about effective programs
- Lack of professional development and ongoing support for teachers implementing prevention programming
- Lack of time and funding



We were also cognizant of other challenges we have seen throughout our grantmaking history

Challenges to long-term sustainability of grant-funded programs

- Lack of leadership engagement
- Staffing turnover
- Programs viewed as “nice to have” add-on programs versus a new approach to performing daily work

Additional challenges facing schools

- Multiple non-academic responsibilities in addition to core academics
- Limited hours in the day



In response to these findings, we launched *Prevention Matters*

- Launched in January 2018 as a three-year initiative for all Marion County K-12 schools starting with the 2018-19 school year
- Partnered with the Indiana Prevention Resource Center to identify 25 evidence-based programs
- Designed the initiative to provide funding only to those districts and schools genuinely committed to prevention and to sustaining the initiative at the end of the grant period
- Awarded grants in two stages:
 - Planning (non-competitive)
 - Implementation (competitive)



PREVENTION
matters

Proven programs to help schools
address substance use



Planning Grants

- All Marion County district, charter and private schools were eligible for non-competitive planning grants of up to \$40,000
- Grants could be used to cover staff time, outside consultants or site visits
- The Foundation made available technical assistance providers to guide schools in selecting the most appropriate evidence-based programs for their student populations and school cultures
- **44 districts or schools received planning grants in March 2018**



Implementation Grants

- All applicants who completed the planning phase were eligible to apply for competitive implementation grants
- Grants cover three years of implementation
- Successful applicants developed a plan to implement one or more of the approved evidence-based prevention programs with fidelity, to integrate the selected program(s) into their school schedule and structure, and to sustain the selected program(s) at the end of the implementation grant cycle.
- **29 implementation grants were awarded in two rounds: July 2018 and December 2018**



Summary of *Prevention Matters*

- \$12 million initiative serving public and private K-12 schools in Marion County
- 27 grantees representing 155 schools (2 grantees stopped participating after Year 1)
- At capacity, will serve approximately 77,500 students
- Evidence-based prevention programs (e.g., Second Step, Life Skills)
- During the grant period, the Foundation provides technical assistance to each grantee to help with implementation, sustainability planning and evaluation
 - EDC (implementation and sustainability planning)
 - RTI (evaluation)
- The Foundation regularly shares evaluation findings with schools and other stakeholders



Prevention Matters replication

- Through the Indiana Substance Use Disorder Funders Collaborative, which the Fairbanks Foundation co-convenes with the Governor's Office, *Prevention Matters* has been shared with funders statewide and has been replicated in three locations:
 - Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte: *Partners in Prevention*
 - North Central Health Services: *Resilient Youth Initiative*
 - Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County: *Precision Health Network Fund* serving middle school students in a nine-county region



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Program Evaluation

- Annual evaluation of 27 implementation grantees comes from three sources:
 - RTI evaluation
 - Grant reports to the Foundation
 - Reports from EDC technical assistance consultants
- These reports help us understand:
 - Progress in implementation and delivering curricula with fidelity
 - Early signs of evidence for impact on student outcomes
 - Challenges encountered and how grantees are addressing them
 - Key lessons to inform implementation in subsequent years



Key evaluation findings in first two years

Leadership Matters

- Superintendents and school leaders set the tone at the top for quality implementation and planning for sustainability

Commitment to Support Teachers/Staff

- Schools must commit to training new teachers/staff annually and providing booster training for existing teachers/staff
- Dedicated time period for instruction, with lesson reinforcement throughout the week across other classes
- Curriculum maps

Monitor Implementation Fidelity

- Regularly observe and provide feedback to teachers/staff to ensure quality of implementation

Regularly Measure Impact

- Measure and track early indicators of implementation success, e.g., students modeling competencies
- Districts/schools must develop rigorous data collection and reporting systems to track “hard outcomes”, e.g., suspensions

Plan for Sustainability

- Prioritize program implementation within district/ school budgets



Tailoring Implementation During COVID-19

Challenges:

- COVID-19 school closures disrupted program implementation for over 75% of grantees, impacting program delivery and data collection
- The pandemic has heightened students' social and emotional needs

Adaptions:

- Increased funding for additional one-on-one TA support in schools, for implementation and also for data collection
- Program developers have developed online course options and accompanying resources for teachers and families; TA providers have shared these adaptations with our 27 grantees
- Program developers have joined affinity groups convened by EDC to create a direct feedback loop between developers and schools



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Key considerations for sustainability

Our Experience

- It's not enough to provide schools a list of evidence-based programs
- Technical assistance from experts in school-based prevention programs who come alongside schools is critical for getting off to a strong start and creating systems and processes that support quality implementation
- Ongoing training (for new staff and booster training for existing staff) is key
- Moderated communities of practice provide an important space for TA and peer-to-peer learning and troubleshooting
- There are recurring costs associated with license renewals and curricular materials purchase
- Schools need help figuring out how to braid funding streams for sustainability



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Thank you!

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