

*YEPP Findings and Recommendations
Maine School Alcohol and Drug Policy for Student Athletes*

This document contains the findings and recommendations of the Youth Empowerment and Policy Project (YEPP) a diverse group of youth from across the state of Maine. The document is intended to provide a series of youth-driven ideas, suggestions, and statements that assist schools and communities in enhancing, incorporating, and strengthening school alcohol and drug policy for student athletes. This work complements the previous year's Findings and Recommendations on general school substance abuse policy.

The YEPP group participated in an intensive three-day institute during which the youth learned from experts in the field of substance abuse and combined their new knowledge to identify their own youth-based findings and recommendations specific to school alcohol and drug policy for student athletes. An important resource and model document used by the group was the Maine Department of Education's publication entitled *Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools.*¹ The YEPP document is formatted to include:

- A **Hallmark** is an ideal. It is our goal, what we strive for.
- **Findings** describe what the reality is. This is what really happens in the practice from a youth perspective.
- **Recommendations** are what you think needs to be done to achieve the hallmarks. They should be remedies to the findings.
- **Suggested actions** represent examples of how to implement the recommendations.

The Findings and Recommendations document was distributed to specific communities by the youth members of the YEPP group and distributed at other statewide events. Most community-level contacts were done at each youth's own school, with some youth working on teams. A total of twelve schools were contacted directly by the youth with the goals of distributing the document and creating a dialogue around local policy. Schools varied in their receptivity to reviewing the Findings and Recommendations presented but the youth. Five of the twelve communities used the document as a model in reviewing exiting policy, and making subsequent changes to policy or its implementation. Contacts made to schools that youth did not attend were less likely to respond to the project. The project evaluator conducted interviews with administrators and teachers as part of the community implementation and feedback indicated that YEPP youth were knowledgeable about policy and implementation and were appropriate in their contacts with school personnel introducing them to the Findings and Recommendations. The YEPP group will continue contact with the five communities implementing change to provide assistance with their policy process.

¹ The Maine Department of Education created the publication *Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools* in response to Public Law 1999, Chapter 351, which required "In consultation with organization representing school boards, school administrators, teachers, parents, and other interested local officials and community members, the commissioner shall develop statewide standards for responsible and ethical student behavior." Local communities are now responsible for identifying "district-wide codes of conduct consistent with the statewide standards" to include acceptable student behavior, student responsibility and consequences for violating established codes of conduct.