

## School-based youth addiction counselling program 2009/2010 RESULTS

With project s.t.e.p.'s help, Ottawa's four school boards are enhancing their substance abuse education and prevention programs in all high schools, including non-traditional academic settings.

Previously, only 22 high schools were providing school-based support to students who are dealing with substance abuse — some programs were not reaching enough students, others were not reaching students as often as they should.

Through the contributions of partners including Health Canada, the Sens Foundation and the Cowan Foundation, and with the ongoing commitment of the four school boards, Ottawa Public Health, the Champlain Local Health Integration Network and United Way Ottawa, we are now beginning to see significant results for our youth. There is still work to be done to ensure full implementation in all of our high schools and non-traditional settings, but we are very encouraged by the increase in services provided (55 schools now have counsellors in place 2 days a week), and the decreases recorded in problematic drug and alcohol use among youth in the school-based program.

With the results of the first city-wide evaluation of the school-based program, we can now demonstrate how the collaborative approach to the issue and the services delivered in the schools are making a difference in the lives of young people.

### Highlights of the Report:

Impact of funding on levels of service and system capacity:

- Before the program started in 2007-08, there were 396.5 hours of school-based counselling per week within the four board's high schools. In 2009-10, it rose to 609 hours per week and for 2010-11 the forecast is 702 hours per week — a 77 per cent increase in system capacity.

Impact on the individuals in the school-based counselling program (of those for whom data was collected):

- 269 of 372 students identified as high risk for dropping out completed their school year
- 59.2 per cent of the 559 who reported cannabis use ended or reduced their use
- 61.1 per cent of the 445 who reported alcohol use ended or reduced their use
- 59.2 per cent of the 118 who reported ecstasy use ended or reduced their use
- 59.2 per cent of the 93 who reported hallucinogen use ended or reduced their use

Impact on families, educators and service providers:

- To help parents, educators and service providers recognize signs of addiction and to intervene with youth at risk, more than 3,000 hours of education and specialized training has been delivered.

Through project s.t.e.p.- funded intervention and counselling initiatives, we have created community-based momentum. Incremental funding is now required to expand the work to junior high schools - reaching an entirely new generation of students before substance abuse problems arise.

You can help us maintain this momentum! To learn more about project s.t.e.p. or to make a contribution, visit

[www.project-step.ca](http://www.project-step.ca)

**"For every dollar spent on addiction treatment and prevention today, at least \$5.60 will be saved in future associated costs."**