



Fall 2009

# Drug Resistance Strategies Project

kiR investigators

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*From kids,  
To kids,  
Through kids*

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We are all excited about the new *keepin' it REAL* (kiR) for rural middle schools. We know we need an effective drug prevention curriculum for rural students. However, before allowing all rural schools to use the curriculum, we need to be sure that it is effective, that it is working. This requires a scientific study in which schools using *keepin' it REAL* are compared to those that are not. These two groups were determined randomly - that is, by chance. As chance would have it, your school has been assigned to the "control" group. This means that for now, you continue with your regular practices regarding health and drug prevention. This allows us to compare the *keepin' it REAL* curriculum to typical or normal practices and scientifically show that kiR is effective.

So, your school, as a control school, has a very important role to play -- without your school this study would be impossible. We know you may be disappointed that you will not have *keepin' it REAL* this academic year, but you can be confident that when you get the curriculum, and you will once the study is over, that it is helping your students by keeping them away from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Everyone has a role to play in this and we appreciate your cooperation while we establish that the new rural *keepin' it REAL* is working.

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refuse · explain · avoid · leave

## What Happens Now

The Survey Research Center (SRC) of Penn State University will administer a student survey to all seventh grade students in order to assess what students know about alcohol, tobacco, and other substances, including the use of those substances in the student's life.

This survey will help us understand what kind of substance abuse prevention messages are effective for our rural youth. Information from the questionnaire will remain confidential.

The SRC will contact you to schedule a time to administer the survey. Parent consent forms must be mailed out three weeks prior to survey administration. Students whose parents give their consent will be assented prior to receiving the survey.

## What's Coming Up

The Survey Research Center of Penn State University will administer a follow-up student survey to all seventh grade student's in the Spring of 2010.

The survey will help us assess any changes in the students attitudes about alcohol, tobacco, and other substances, including the use of those substances in the students life over the year. Information from the questionnaire will remain confidential.

The SRC and your liaison will contact you to schedule a time to administer the survey. Only those students whose parents give their consent will receive the survey.

## Incentives For Your School's Participation

We are so glad that you have agreed to participate in the research study. Even though you are not implementing the curriculum this year, there are a number of incentives you will receive:

1. \$500/ year for the school for three years
2. In the Fall of 2011 you will receive a copy of the kiR 7th grade curriculum and the 8th grade boosters
3. Free teacher training (typically a cost of \$3,000)
4. Report on substance use in rural schools by state



The Penn State Survey Research Center (SRC) is currently working with the *keepin' it REAL (kiR)* project to help coordinate and administer surveys to 6300 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at 41 schools in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The SRC works with each school to schedule a time when the survey can be administered. SRC staff will visit each participating school to explain the survey process to students and distribute the survey. The surveys are then collected and returned to the SRC offices where they are scanned and a final data file is compiled.

The staff at the SRC also handles sending out information to parents regarding the survey process so parents are fully informed of their child's participation.

Kari Whitehead will be your point of contact at the SRC. She will assist your school in making the necessary preparations to administer the survey, including obtaining parental consent and student assents. If you have any questions regarding the SRC or their role in this project please don't hesitate to contact Keri at the SRC .



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Do you want to let the community know that your school will be working with Penn State and Ohio State to develop and evaluate the only drug prevention for rural youth? Following is a sample press release that you can send to your local newspaper to increase parent and community support!

## NEW DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR RURAL YOUTH

The [insert district name] school district is now working with researchers at the Pennsylvania State and Ohio State Universities to develop and test a substance abuse prevention program specifically for rural middle school students.

The new program, funded by the National Institutes of Health, features the *keepin' it REAL* (kiR) curriculum, which utilizes stories, feedback, and advice from local youth and teachers to customize prevention curricula for adolescents in our district.

The acronym REAL stands for the four ways the adolescents resist drug offers (Refuse, Explain, Avoid, Leave) and the kiR curriculum teaches youth how to confidently live substance-free, drawing on their strengths and the strengths of their families and communities. Several Pennsylvania high schools were instrumental in developing five short films that are integrated into the curriculum and illustrate rural experiences.

For more information about the Drug Resistance Strategies Project featuring the kiR curriculum go to : [www.kir.psu.edu/rural/](http://www.kir.psu.edu/rural/)



### Liaison Contacts

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We're moving our offices! Here's our new contact information:

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Check out the new kiR website:  
[www.kir.psu.edu/rural/](http://www.kir.psu.edu/rural/)