



September 9, 2011

Dear Northfield Middle School staff,

Welcome back! We hope you had a restful summer and that the new school year is off to a great start!

We wanted to take a moment to provide you with some information about the *MOST Northfield Students* social norms campaign that will be implemented again this year. Sponsored by the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use and the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative, the goal of this initiative is to correct student misperceptions regarding their peers' drug and alcohol use. This initiative attempts to change students' perceptions. Students often believe that more of their peers use alcohol or drugs than actually do. By correcting these beliefs, students experience more support for choosing to not use alcohol or drugs. Similar campaigns have been initiated all over the state of Minnesota. The first two years of this project at Northfield Middle School have been well received by students and by staff. We are excited to be working again with the Northfield Middle School during 2011-12!

The plan is to again run a high-energy, thought-provoking campaign that will appeal to the students. Every 3 to 4 weeks, there will be a new "message" introduced at the middle school. This message will take shape through posters, t-shirts, promotional items and/or lunchtime activities. **We will be sure to put a copy of each poster in your mailbox, in hopes that you will hang it in your classroom.**

The overall theme of the campaign is MOST. That is, we will take information from recent student surveys to highlight areas where the perceived student norm differs from the reported student behaviors. For example, surveys of Northfield students have shown that while 98% of 6th graders and 92% of 8th graders in Northfield report not using alcohol in the past 30 days, less than half of Northfield middle school youth believe that very few of their peers drink and over one-third of 8th graders believe most of their peers drink. Correcting these misperceptions can have a preventative effect as students are faced with decisions regarding their own experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

Only about a third of the messages will be specifically aimed at correcting misperceptions about drug and alcohol use. The rest will be used to provide credibility to the campaign and positively influence those "protective factors" that are so vital to healthy attitudes and choices among students. The campaign is designed to be positive and FUN and to celebrate the positive aspects of student behavior.

As exciting as this opportunity is, please remember that this campaign is by no means "the end of the story." This initiative is meant to be used as a tool in the overall strategy to address alcohol and drug abuse in our community. **We need your help to reinforce these messages and will provide a series of brief lesson guides for the drug and alcohol messages for you to consider using with your students.** We hope you will find this useful. We have also included a copy of a grant application, in case you run into any costs in helping to support the campaign.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Susan Sanderson (Susan.Sanderson@nfld.k12.mn.us, 507-581-0310).

Thanks in advance for your support of this campaign! Have a great start to the school year!