

For Immediate Release  
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### **Keokuk County Teachers Learn New Alcohol Curriculum for Middle School Students**

On October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, fifteen teachers and school staff from four school districts participated in *Project Northland* training. The teachers from Keota, Pekin, Sigourney and Tri-County schools will then start teaching the curriculum to middle school students this school year as a part of their usual class curriculum.

*Project Northland* is based on the most rigorous alcohol-use prevention trial ever funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and was developed in northern Minnesota, a region of the country that led the nation in alcohol-related teen traffic fatalities. The program was designed by prevention researchers to delay the age when youth begin drinking, to reduce use among young people who have tried alcohol, to limit the use of other drugs, and to reduce alcohol-related problems.

*Project Northland* employs grade-specific tasks, exercises, and activities in a variety of highly engaging, interactive formats--such as comic books and posters--to reach young people at an age when they are most likely to try alcohol. Because this program includes important community components, it can be effectively implemented by schools as well as by community programs.

For the sixth grade students, they will learn with a comic-strip theme and entertaining activities, the *Slick Tracy* program draws young people and their families together to discuss alcohol-related issues.

For the seventh grade, *Amazing Alternatives!* uses imaginative, kid-tested ideas about resisting alcohol and appreciating alcohol-free activities get students and their peers talking and problem solving.

For the eighth grade, *PowerLines* reinforces the messages and strategies of *Slick Tracy* and *Amazing Alternatives!*, *PowerLines* gets kids thinking about how community groups and organizations, parents, police, schools, media, liquor stores and bars, and local government--influence prevention efforts.

Project Northland is a CSAP-approved curriculum with proven outcomes. Overall, outcomes from an initial three-year test of the program show that, relative to the control group, students who participated in Project Northland demonstrated reduced levels of alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use and displayed more resilient behaviors.

This curriculum and training are being provided through a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools. The KC STAAR project implements several research based strategies to reduce substance abuse in Keokuk County.