

# S.P.A.R.T.A.N.

## ***SAFETY, POSITIVITY, AND REINFORCING THOUGHTS AGAINST NARCOTICS***

Dear Parents,

I would like to introduce our new anti-drug curriculum for Region 12. We have decided to move away from the traditional D.A.R.E. program and initiate the new S.P.A.R.T.A.N. (*Safety, Positivity and Reinforcing Thoughts Against Narcotics*) program.

DARE is a national program, and it is proprietary. This means it has to be standardized to be relevant to a wide spectrum of communities. This can create a situation where certain instructional time-blocks are not put to the best use and the content is not necessarily relevant to the current audience.

Our approach is to both preserve the core components of DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and also to focus on the trending challenges *specific* to Region 12 youth. Further, we feel it is important to move away from the traditional DARE model of providing all of the instruction to one age group, 5th graders, and then ending the program without any further reinforcement. It is true that our SPARTAN program provides fewer classes at the 5th grade level, eight in total; however, the instruction will continue with two very detailed follow up lessons to every 6th grade class. Additionally we hope to continue with several small peer group talk sessions at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

As the School Resource Officer I believe this plan is superior to the DARE model for the challenges that our youth face on a daily basis change as they get older and move on to new environments. This is most true in the public school system, where 5th graders are at the top of the elementary school configuration, then very quickly go back to the bottom of the configuration when they enter middle school. They once again experience varying degrees of uncertainty and insecurity. They face new challenges that come with

the new physical and social environment. Often, this is when youth are most susceptible to peer pressure. Our SPARTAN model allows us not only to reinforce old lessons learned, but also to tailor our approach and our content to the challenges of the new environment and the children's current phase of development.

At the 7th and 8th grade levels, the schools have several different peer groups. These smaller groups create a very comfortable environment for our youth to share real life problems and challenges that they face every day. Our SPARTAN model allows us to be part of these groups, on request, several times throughout the year. This is further reinforced at yet another stage of the children's development, and also allows for a more personal connection between the mentoring officer and the youth facing a very real and very specific challenge.

During the first classes beginning the first week of April, the children will be asked to complete a "drug questionnaire" to gauge their knowledge of what drugs are and to help tailor the lesson plans accordingly. The eight classes for the fifth grade will cover: Decision Making, Peer Pressure, Internet Safety and Drug Education focused specifically on Marijuana, Alcohol, Tobacco (with a focus on Vaping), Prescription Pills and an overview of the Opioid Epidemic.

In summary, I feel the SPARTAN model is far more efficient and impactful than its predecessor. In the end, the time commitment is beyond what DARE offered, but spread over a longer period of time, through various stages of our children's development. The focused approach at the 5th grade level, the tailored reinforcement at the 6th grade level, and the more intimate settings at the 7th and 8th grade levels all amount to a very complete program designed to have maximum impact on our youth.

Please feel free to reach out to me with a phone call or email if you have any questions or concerns regarding the program.

Respectfully,

Officer Richard Innaimo  
Region 12 School Resource Officer  
Washington/Roxbury/Bridgewater Police  
860-868-6215  
[Innaimor@region-12.org](mailto:Innaimor@region-12.org)