



RONALD A. ARNONI, DISTRICT JUDGE

District Court 05-2-20
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The LEAD Program

Building Strong Communities One Student and Family at a Time



This past year, I have teamed up with other individuals to make a difference in the lives of students and families in our local communities. The organization we created is called Leadership-Development, and its flagship program is LEAD, which stands for leadership, education, accountability, and direction.

LEAD is a three-tiered program that covers drugs (including vaping), alcohol, and social media, and also teaches students leadership skills. Programmed as a 60-minute assembly, it currently targets seventh through 12th graders and their families. Recently, colleges and universities have been inquiring how LEAD can assist their staff in preventing problems on their campuses.

To help students learn about this life-changing information, we apply several scientifically-proven teaching techniques, including visualization, mapping, and inquiry-based learning. Students remain acutely attentive during the program due to its one-of-a-kind, back-and-forth content delivery, along with powerful short videos.

To further help families educate themselves and their children, we created our LEAD manual. A proprietary and comprehensive resource, it provides information about the risks of drugs, alcohol, and social media. The manual includes the five Ds to success (direction, distractions, decisions, discipline, and development), real-life scenarios, and LEAD challenges.

When a crisis occurs, it is critical to know that you are never alone and that help is always available. An entire section of the LEAD manual is dedicated to 24/7 hotlines, supportive websites, and text lines. For example, the Crisis Text Line

(Text: HOME to 741741Crisis Text Line) is free, 24/7 support for those in crisis, connecting people in crisis to trained crisis counselors. The counselors' first priority is helping people move from a hot moment to a cool calm, guiding callers to create a plan to stay safe and healthy.

By the end of the 2019–2020 school year, the LEAD program will have positively impacted more than 50,000 students and their families in and around Allegheny County. The LEAD program is made available at no cost to local school districts, thanks to the many caring sponsors.

We appreciate the opportunity to work cooperatively with organizations and programs, like LEAD, that encourage our students to practice responsible behaviors and decision-making. These partnerships are crucial to ensuring that students are equipped to successfully navigate challenging situations.—Dr. John Rozzo, Upper St. Clair School District Superintendent



Judge Ron Arnoni answers questions after a LEAD presentation.



Brad Killmeyer, national youth speaker and author of Write to Dream, speaks at a LEAD program at North Allegheny School District.

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Students reach for bracelets that are being tossed out to the crowd.

Download the free LEAD manual by visiting www.OurLeadFamily.com/LeadManual. For more information or to get involved with Lead, visit www.Ourleadfamily.com.