



Rockwood Moves to New Drug and Alcohol Prevention Education Program

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Starting this fall, drug and alcohol prevention education will have a new look for Rockwood School District fifth-graders.

The St. Louis County Police Department is phasing out the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program as it shifts resources to other community initiatives. As a result, Rockwood is replacing DARE with LifeSkills Training for the 2020-2021 school year.

"We're going to keep everything in place. The officers that have been teaching DARE will continue to teach prevention programs for fifth-graders," said Rockwood Drug-Free Coalition Coordinator Lili Schliesser. "It will continue to be 10 weeks long. Students will still have graduations where parents can come. It's going to look very much the same as it has."

Schliesser said that, when the district started researching DARE replacements, LifeSkills had the highest ratings as far as outcomes for students. Rockwood will hold two days of training sessions, July 23 and 24, for school resource officers to prepare them to teach the LifeSkills system once the school year starts in August.

"The LifeSkills program is based on personal development and mental health that will lead to making positive choices: enhancing self-esteem, developing problem-solving skills, reducing stress and anxiety, how they manage anger," Schliesser said. "When we're looking at prevention education – especially at the younger level – when it's a skill-based program, this is more effective than saying, 'Here's a substance, and here's why it's bad.' Through this approach, we're preparing kids more for when they're going to encounter drugs and alcohol."

Drug-specific education is delivered to Rockwood students from fifth grade through high school by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (NCADA). Marijuana, tobacco and alcohol are covered for fifth-graders, before introducing prevention education dealing with different drugs in middle and high school.



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