

Oregon Substance Use Prevention Middle School Media Campaign

Oregon Department of Education

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Introduction

This implementation plan aims to support Oregon schools in delivering effective substance use prevention education. Following legislative actions in 2023 and 2024, this guide includes media campaign materials and strategies tailored for middle schools.

In 2023, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 238, which established a requirement for development and district implementation of curriculum supplements and lesson plans on the dangers of synthetic opioids, including fentanyl or any substituted derivative of fentanyl, and counterfeit and fake drugs and the laws that provide immunity or other protections for persons who report drug or alcohol use or who seek medical treatment for drug or alcohol overdoses for themselves or others. Building on this initiative, the 2024 legislature added to and increased the focus on opioid prevention with House Bill 5204, which makes both a short- and long-term investment in substance use prevention. This bill provided funding for the development of substance use prevention media campaigns for schools to use.

WestEd and Song for Charlie, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education, facilitated listening sessions with middle school students to identify key messages and gather feedback on materials to support a substance use prevention media campaign. Using feedback from the students, the team developed campaign materials for middle schools to implement.

Oregon's collaborative investment seeks not only to raise awareness of substance use prevention strategies but also to equip schools with effective tools for ongoing communication with students and their families. This plan provides structured support for implementing these initiatives and fostering a safer, more informed school community.

True Friends Media Campaign

Background

Most people are aware that fentanyl has had a large impact on Oregon, but many are surprised to hear that drug overdose currently is the leading cause of death for young people in our state. Schools have an opportunity to help address this alarming trend and protect their students by providing youth with evidence-based substance use prevention messaging.

Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, all Oregon school districts and public charter schools are required to implement one of the ODE Synthetic Opioid Prevention Lessons at each grade level (grades 6, 7, 8 and at least once in high school). In addition to information about synthetic opioids and their risks, these classroom lessons include information about Oregon's Good Samaritan laws and how to administer naloxone.

The True Friends campaign is a free, turnkey resource for schools to use to reinforce the ODE Synthetic Opioid Lessons students receive in the classroom and provide evidence-based social norms messaging that encourages healthy behaviors and attitudes. Some of the positive social skills that are encouraged in this campaign include encouraging your friends to stay safe, respecting your friends' choices and finding healthy ways to manage stress. This substance use prevention campaign is meant to complement the classroom instruction Oregon students receive and can be used at various times of the year, acting as a reminder of some of the lessons students have learned and to help build social and personal skills outside of the classroom. Messaging in this "True Friends" campaign avoids detrimental fear-based and stigmatizing language and relies on evidence-based approaches.

This print media campaign was developed for the Oregon Department of Education by WestEd and Song for Charlie and is available in English and Spanish and is free for all Oregon schools to use.

Overview of True Friends Campaign

- **Key messages:** The True Friends campaign reinforces the substance use prevention and mental health messaging taught in health classrooms by bringing the messaging throughout the campus. It promotes social norms of respecting others' boundaries and keeping friends safe. It emphasizes a positive, evidence-based approach that promotes healthy behaviors and attitudes without using scare tactics or stigmatizing language.
- **Campaign elements:** This print media campaign, designed for use by middle schools, provides messaging via multiple strategies, including posters, postcards and caregiver messaging. The materials can be used as is. The implementation plan includes instructions and templates for printing the materials and considerations for increasing student buy-in.
 - **Posters:** Engaging, informative posters that promote positive mental health and substance use prevention strategies to students that can be displayed at school.
 - **Postcards:** Mini and standard-sized postcards that provide students, teachers and staff opportunities to recognize students who exhibit positive behaviors around safety and friendship. The postcards primarily are designed for student use, but one mini postcard has been designed for teachers to use to recognize students.
 - **Caregiver messaging:** A campaign video to inform parents and caregivers of this campaign and encourage caregivers to talk to their students about the campaign and reinforce the messaging at home.

- **Campaign design:** The campaign toolkit provides instructions and links to materials to run the True Friends print media campaign on your middle school campus. The campaign posters are designed to be printed and posted in school hallways, bathrooms, health offices, etc. The mini postcard campaign is designed to promote positive friendships between students. The postcards should be printed and distributed to students and school staff. Students are encouraged to give away mini postcards to their friends who respect their boundaries and help to keep them safe. Teachers and staff can also give students postcards when they see them exhibiting these positive friendship behaviors. The Parent and Caregiver Informational Video can be shared with caregivers by a building administrator or other school leader through existing communication channels.
- **Messaging approach:** The campaign focuses on being informative by promoting social norms for students and offering clear and concise information that is empowering. It is action-oriented and focuses on building protective factors. The campaign is rooted in the evidence-based principles of caring for others and supporting students as they build the skills they need to be healthy. True Friends avoids fear-based language and instead uses positive terms that do not label or judge individuals, promoting an inclusive and supportive atmosphere. Examples of language the campaign avoids include terms such as "abuser," "addict," "lethal," "scary," and other negative connotations. By integrating these guidelines, the campaign aims to provide a welcoming environment that supports the well-being of students and their communities.

Target Audience

The middle school campaign is targeted directly at middle school students, with messaging that is intended to educate them about the risks of fake pills and fentanyl and ways to protect their mental health and make safe decisions around substance use.

Recommended Timing

The True Friends campaign educates your students on substances, builds protective factors and supports positive youth development. The campaign includes research-based messaging around friendship and identity, such as helping friends to make healthy decisions and looking out for their safety. Campaign materials can be spread throughout the year or repeated to promote ongoing conversations and collaboration with students. The campaign can be implemented at any time that is convenient for your campus. However, you may consider implementing this campaign during one of these relevant times:

- **October:** October is National Substance Use Prevention Month. If your school already has substance use education planned for this month, this campaign will complement that nicely.
- **April:** April is Stress Awareness Month, and these campaigns reinforce the idea that finding healthy ways to cope with challenging moments is key to staying safe.
- If October and April are not ideal for your district or school, you may want to schedule the campaign 1–2 months after the annually required Opioid Prevention Lessons are taught to remind students of the lessons they have already learned.

It is generally not advised to run the campaign during September or June, when students are already busy with the beginning of the school year and end-of-year activities.

Accessibility Tips

You may be required to ensure that all public information and communications comply with accessibility laws and guidelines, like the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG). To ensure the campaign is inclusive and reaches as many caregivers and students as possible, schools should consider the following accessibility best practices for social media:

- **Make video content accessible:** Closed captions are essential for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. We provided transcripts and closed captions for the video. Some platforms (YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn) allow you to add their closed captioning files for video posts. Other platforms (Instagram, TikTok and X) require captions to be burned into the video, which has been done for you.

This small step can make a big difference in helping everyone access and engage with the messages.

Running the Campaign

Below is an outline for implementing True Friends in your school. It includes an incentive-based approach to engaging students that may not work for your school. **You know your school and community best and should adjust or redesign the campaign as needed.** Other ways to engage students include:

- Host a challenge to see who can “send” the most postcards in a month.
- Make postcards freely available throughout the year in the school office and other central locations of the school.
- Host an event (e.g., school dance, concert, free gym time) where the postcards provide an entry ticket.

In addition, a sample 4-week roll-out schedule is provided below. You may choose to run the campaign as a focused 4-week event, condense it into a shorter period, or use the campaign materials throughout the year.

Getting Ready: Prior to Launch

The following details should be determined prior to the launch of the campaign:

- **Dates:** What are the dates you would like to run the campaign? A 4-week window is suggested, but the campaign can be shortened or lengthened.
- **Volunteers:** Who can help with preparing the campaign materials (printing, bundling, etc.)? A few helpers or volunteers will be needed to prepare the materials for distribution to the teachers and student body.
- **Distribution:** Who will be distributing campaign materials to students? This program fits nicely with health or PE classes or advisory, or it could be distributed in any other class that works for your school. We recommend devising a plan that ensures all students receive the materials during the same 1–2 days.
- **Budget:** If you plan to launch the complete program, we estimate the following expenses for supplies:

Supplies	250 students	500 students	1,000 students	1,500 students
Printing, envelopes, paperclips	\$400	\$600	\$850	\$1,200
Incentives	Determined by school	Determined by school	Determined by school	Determined by school

If your school does not have a wellness or printing budget that would cover this cost, we recommend working alongside your school's PTA, PTSA or other caregiver group, local drug-free coalitions or community-based organizations, or local (city or county) health department to fund this campaign.

While we recommend at least seven (two standard and five mini) postcards per student, two mini postcards for teachers and staff, and several sets of posters throughout the school for the campaign, you can reduce costs by scaling back the number of postcards each student receives.

Advertising: How will you motivate students to share postcards? Plan to remind students to share mini postcards regularly during the campaign (daily announcements, newsletters or however you normally communicate with your students).

- **Collection:** Will you count or collect and count the postcards? Where and how will mini postcards be counted? Will designated teachers count mini postcards in class? Will there be collector bins in the cafeteria? Or in the office? Plan where to collect mini postcards and how they will be counted.
- **Student incentives** (if included in plan): Is there funding available for student incentives? What incentives will be provided to encourage students to share the mini postcards? You know your students best. What will get them excited? Some incentive ideas include the following:
 - Recognition during school announcements or in the school newsletter
 - Shadow the principal for a day
 - Breakfast or lunch with the principal
 - Brain break activities for their class
 - School supplies
 - Gift cards to a local eatery
 - Amazon gift cards, or gift cards for local retailers
 - Tickets to a school dance or other event
- **Winners** (if included in the plan): When and how will the prize winners be selected? How can you publicly recognize the winners?

Preparing Materials for Launch

1. **Order printing:** A few weeks before the projected start of the campaign, print the appropriate number of campaign postcards and posters, allowing time for preparation before the launch.

Use the Campaign Material Ordering Worksheet below to help you place a print order for your school.

2. **Organize postcards for distribution:** We recommend that the postcard materials be organized prior to the launch date to ensure the postcard distribution goes smoothly. Classroom materials preparation:
 - **Recruit volunteers:** We recommend recruiting volunteers to work together to prepare the student and teacher materials for easy classroom distribution.
 - **Collect materials:** To prepare the campaign materials, you will need the following materials on hand: printed campaign materials, large manila envelopes (one per classroom), paperclips (one per student) and class headcount for each teacher who will be distributing the campaign materials.
 - **Create classroom packages:** Volunteers will create envelopes for each classroom (e.g., homeroom, advisory or other class all students attend) where campaign materials are to be distributed. Each classroom envelope should have the name of the teacher written on the outside and include the following:
 - One set of student postcards per student. Each student set will include two standard postcards and five mini postcards, paperclipped or otherwise bundled, that they can share with peers.
 - One set of teacher mini teacher postcards. Each teacher will receive five mini postcards of the teacher-labeled design that they will distribute to students.
 - Teacher instructions for handing out materials (see Appendix A).
3. **Distribute materials to teachers:** Distribute complete campaign material envelopes (e.g., put in their mail slots) 1–2 days prior to the campaign launch to each classroom. In addition to classroom packages, distribute mini teacher postcards (a maximum of five) to staff who will not be distributing the campaign materials to a classroom, but who may want to give postcards to students. All teachers, counselors and building staff should be given the opportunity to distribute mini postcards to students who exhibit positive friendship traits.

Sample Campaign 4-Week Roll-out

Once your campaign preparation is complete, you may choose to roll it out using the following steps:

WEEK 1

- Start by putting posters up on the walls in the areas you have designated. Note: We recommend two sets of six posters (one English set, one Spanish set) for each designated area.
- Send an email to your parent and caregiver community with the link to the Caregiver Informational Video. This will help educate them and make them aware of the campaign. This can help foster communication about this issue at home.
- Provide printed materials and instructions to the teachers who have been identified to distribute them during class.
- Ask teachers to distribute the postcards to the students on the designated day, following the provided teacher instructions (see Appendix A). Remind teachers to track who receives their postcards so students who are absent from class can be given their materials when they return.

WEEK 2

- Remind students to continue sharing cards with their true friends.
- If applicable, remind students to drop the cards they received from friends or teachers into the designated drop area.
- If applicable, draw the first winner at the end of the week. If possible, draw the winner in a public manner to create excitement.

WEEK 3

- Remind students to continue sharing cards with their true friends.
- If applicable, remind students to drop the cards they received from friends or teachers into the designated drop area.
- If applicable, draw the second winner at the end of the week.

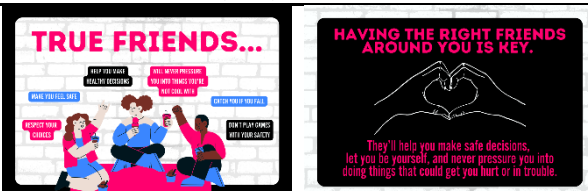
WEEK 4

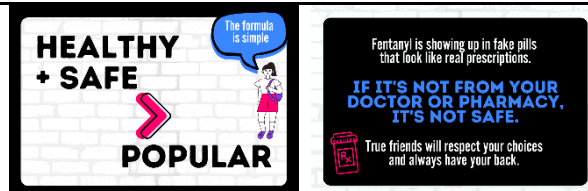
- Remind students to continue sharing cards with their true friends.
- If applicable, remind students to drop the cards they received from friends or teachers into the designated drop area.
- If applicable, draw the third winner at the end of the week.

Middle School Media Campaign Files

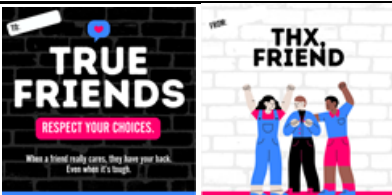
English Campaign Files

Standard Postcard

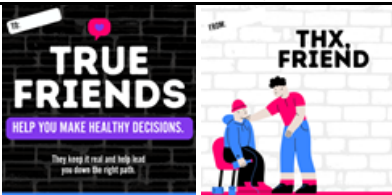
Title	Student: Standard Postcard #1, English
Type of Content	Standard Postcard (4x6)
Images	
Link	Standard Postcard #1 Front Standard Postcard #1 Back

Title	Student: Standard Postcard #2, English
Type of Content	Standard Postcard (4x6)
Images	
Link	Standard Postcard #2 Front Standard Postcard #2 Back

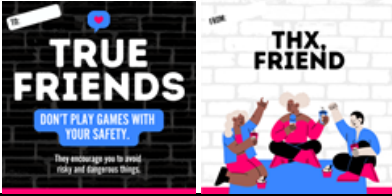
Mini Postcard

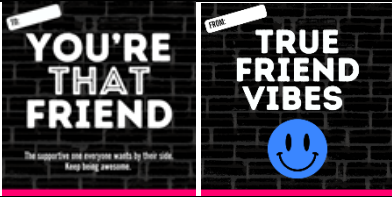
Title	Student: Mini Postcard #1, English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard #1 Front Mini Postcard #1 Back

Title	Student: Mini Postcard #2, English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard #2 Front Mini Postcard #2 Back


Title	Student: Mini Postcard #3, English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard #3 Front Mini Postcard #3 Back


Title	Student: Mini Postcard #4, English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard #4 Front Mini Postcard #4 Back


Title	Student: Mini Postcard #5, English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard #5 Front Mini Postcard #5 Back


Title	Teacher Mini Postcard: English
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Mini Postcard Teacher Front Mini Postcard Teacher Back

Poster

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #1: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #1

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #2: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #2

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #3: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #3

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #4: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #4

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #5: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #5

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #6: English
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Poster #6

Parent and Caregiver Video

Title	Parent and Caregiver Informational Video
Type of Content	A short informational video for parents and caregivers.
Link	Parent and caregiver video
Closed Captioning	Closed Captioning
Transcript	Transcript
Slide Deck	Slide Deck

Spanish Campaign Files

Standard Postcard

Title	Student: Standard Postcard #1, Spanish
Type of Content	Standard Postcard (4x6)
Images	
Link	Spanish Standard Postcard #1 Front Spanish Standard Postcard #1 Back

Title	Student: Standard Postcard #2, Spanish
Type of Content	Standard Postcard (4x6)
Images	
Link	Spanish Standard Postcard #2 Front Spanish Standard Postcard #2 Back

Mini Postcard

Title	Student: Mini Postcard #1, Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard #1 Front Spanish Mini Postcard #1 Back

Title	Student: Mini Postcard #2, Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard #2 Front Spanish Mini Postcard #2 Back

Title	Student: Mini Postcard #3, Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard #3 Front Spanish Mini Postcard #3 Back

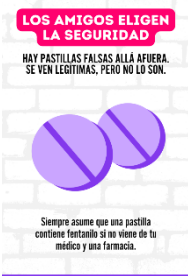
Title	Student: Mini Postcard #4, Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	 <p>The front of the postcard features a white brick wall background with a purple speech bubble containing a heart. The text reads: "PARA: AMIGOS VERDADEROS... TE APOYAN SI CAES. Te respaldan, te escuchan y te ayudan a levantarte." The back of the postcard features a black brick wall background with the text: "GRACIAS, AMIGO!" and an illustration of three people hugging.</p>
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard #4 Front Spanish Mini Postcard #4 Back

Title	Student: Mini Postcard #5, Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	 <p>The front of the postcard features a black brick wall background with a purple speech bubble containing a heart. The text reads: "TU AMIGOS VERDADEROS... NO JUEGAN CON TU SEGURIDAD. Te ayudan a evitar cosas riesgosas y peligrosas." The back of the postcard features a white brick wall background with the text: "GRACIAS, AMIGO!" and an illustration of three people hugging.</p>
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard #5 Front Spanish Mini Postcard #5 Back

Title	Teacher Mini Postcard: Spanish
Type of Content	Mini Postcard (2.5x2.5)
Images	 <p>The front of the postcard features a black brick wall background with the text: "ERES ESE AMIGO... El comprensivo que todos quieren a su lado. Sigue siendo increíble." The back of the postcard features a black brick wall background with the text: "VIBES DE AMIGO VERDADERO" and a purple smiley face.</p>
Link	Spanish Mini Postcard Teacher Front Spanish Mini Postcard Teacher Back

Poster

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #1: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	 <p>The poster features a white brick wall background with a purple speech bubble containing a heart. The text reads: "LOS AMIGOS ELIGEN LA SEGURIDAD. SI ALGO SE PONE RARO, ES INTELIGENTE TENER UNA FORMA DE SALIR DE LA SITUACION." Below the text is an illustration of three people hugging. At the bottom, it says: "OPCIONES PARA SALIR: 'Mis papas me ayudan de muchas maneras.' 'Tengo que irme.' 'No me siento bien. Me voy a casa.' 'Me gusta esto. Me voy.'"</p>
Link	Spanish Poster #1

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #2: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Spanish Poster #2

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #3: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Spanish Poster #3

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #4: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Spanish Poster #4

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #5: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Spanish Poster #5

Title	Friends Choose Safety Poster #6: Spanish
Type of Content	11x17 Color Poster
Image	
Link	Spanish Poster #6

Parent and Caregiver Video

Title	Parent and Caregiver Informational Video: Spanish
Type of Content	A short informational video for parents and caregivers.
Link	Spanish Parent and Caregiver Video
Closed Captioning	Spanish Closed Captioning
Transcript	Spanish Transcript
Slide Deck	Spanish Slide Deck

Appendix A

Teacher Instructions for Distributing Mini Postcards

Use these instructions when teachers are distributing the media campaign materials to their students. The person administering the campaign should fill in the school-specific portion of the message before providing it to the teachers distributing the materials.

Teachers, please read the following when distributing the True Friends campaign materials to your classroom:

Students,

Today, we're kicking off a school-wide campaign to help share a few key health and safety messages. You will see Friends Choose Safety posters throughout campus, so be sure to give them a read. In addition to those, I'm going to be giving each of you a set of True Friends postcards [hold up the cards].

The two larger postcards are for you to keep. These cards share good reminders about what it means to be a true friend, important information about substances today and things to be aware of. [SHOW THE CARDS AND READ THEM OUTLOUD] Why do you think having true friends is part of substance use prevention? What messages in the postcards stood out to you? These messages are super important because here in Oregon, overdoses are now the leading cause of death for young people. We want you to know how to stay safe and how to take care of your friends.

The smaller cards are for you to give to friends who, by the definitions on the cards, are true friends. [OPTION TO SHOW THE CARDS AND READ THEM] Write your name on the "From" line on the back. Before you give out a card to a friend, write their name on the "To" line. You can give cards to your friends anytime during the school day, not just in this class.

If you receive a card from a friend, make sure your name is on the "To" line, and then drop the card in [NAME THE DESIGNATED DROP LOCATION ON CAMPUS].

We will be drawing [ADD NUMBER OF WINNERS] winners from the [bin/jar/box] to receive:

NAME THE PRIZES DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL

Does anyone have any questions?

Appendix B

Middle School Campaign Material Ordering Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help ensure you order the necessary materials for a campaign for your school.

Step 1: Calculate Quantities Needed (on backside of sheet)

- Number of students to receive English-language materials:
- Number of students to receive Spanish-language materials:
- Number of teachers and staff to receive English-language materials:
- Number of teachers and staff to receive Spanish-language materials:
- Number of locations in the school where posters will be displayed:

Step 2: Order Postcards and Posters

The following printing companies** provide print services. We recommend getting quotes from two or three printers for a more real-time assessment of the current cost and turnaround time.

- Pacific Office Automation: Email order to printservices@pacificoffice.com for a quote.
- vistaprint: www.vistaprint.com
- FedEx: www.FedEx.com
- Office Depot: www.officedepot.com

**These printing companies are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Oregon Department of Education of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual.

Postcards

- There are two postcard sizes.
 - Standard rectangle postcards are 4"x6", two-sided
 - Mini square postcards are 2.5"x2.5", two-sided
- All the postcards should be printed in full color.
- Postcards should be printed on standard postcard stock, with matte finish

Posters

- Posters are designed to be printed 11"x17", one-sided
- All should be printed in full color.
- Posters should be printed on premium poster stock, with matte finish.
- Ideally, you would put up two or more sets of posters (six posters in each set) in different locations on campus to reach more students.

English Language Content Order Quantities

Item	Design	5 per staff	1 per student	Total Order Quantity
Standard Postcards (4x6)	Student: Standard Postcard #1, English		0	
	Student: Standard Postcard #2, English		0	
Mini Postcards (2.5"x2.5")	Student: Mini Postcard #1, English		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #2, English		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #3, English		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #4, English		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #5, English		0	
	Teacher: "You're That Friend" Postcard, English	0		

Item	Design	set of 6 posters per location	Total Order Quantity
11"x17" Posters	Friends Choose Safety Poster #1, English		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #2, English		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #3, English		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #4, English		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #5, English		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #6, English		

Spanish Language Content Order Quantities

Item	Design	5 per staff	1 per student	Total Order Quantity
Standard Postcards (4x6)	Student: Standard Postcard #1, Spanish		0	
	Student: Standard Postcard #2, Spanish		0	
Mini Postcards (2.5"x2.5")	Student: Mini Postcard #1, Spanish		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #2, Spanish		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #3, Spanish		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #4, Spanish		0	
	Student: Mini Postcard #5, Spanish		0	
	Teacher: "You're That Friend" Postcard, Spanish	0		

Item	Design	set of 6 per location	Total Order Quantity
11"x17" Posters	Friends Choose Safety Poster #1, Spanish		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #2, Spanish		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #3, Spanish		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #4, Spanish		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #5, Spanish		
	Friends Choose Safety Poster #6, Spanish		