



# PUBLIC POLICY & INFORMATION

*Promoting Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Through Advocacy and Education*

## **POSITION PAPER** **No. 8/213th Legislature** **(2008-09)**

### **ISSUE:**

Modifies reference from “substance awareness coordinator” to “student assistance coordinator” in substance abuse programs in public schools.

### **BILL NO.**

S-208 (Singer)

### **NCADD-NJ POSITION:**

NCADD-New Jersey supports bill S-208. The reclassification of the “substance awareness coordinator” to “student assistance coordinator” is necessary because the position has expanded since its inception in 1987. Whereas a substance awareness coordinator’s responsibilities once pertained strictly to drug abuse issues, the position now addresses mental health and family matters as well.

In 2003, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that approximately 50% of individuals with severe mental disorders are affected by substance abuse. Thus, in addition to addressing substance abuse, substance awareness coordinators are also addressing individual and family needs of students who have co-occurring disorders. Since the position was created, the field of adolescent substance abuse has widened to include mental health and family and community issues.

NCADD-NJ feels that reclassifying the position as “student assistance coordinator” more accurately reflects the broadened scope of services provided to school districts, students, families and the community.

### **CONTACT**

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