



Making Sense of Student Drug Testing

Why Educators Are Saying No

2ND EDITION

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THE DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE is the nation's leading organization working to end the war on drugs and promote new drug policies based on science, compassion, health, and human rights.

FOREWORD

For the safety and wellbeing of young people, it is crucial to develop programs that effectively address drug use. To succeed, these programs must be grounded in research, compassion and health. They must also promote trust and honest dialogue between adults and young people.

The authors of this booklet, the Drug Policy Alliance and the American Civil Liberties Union, have analyzed, researched and litigated issues related to student drug testing for many years. We have listened to the experts – from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association to hundreds of concerned educators, parents and students across the country. **The experts agree, and the evidence is clear: random drug testing does not effectively reduce drug use among young people.**

This booklet demonstrates the key flaws in random student drug testing as well as the components of promising alternatives. We hope it informs your decisions about how best to address drug use among young people in your community.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Comprehensive, rigorous and respected research shows there are many reasons why random student drug testing is not good policy:

- Drug testing is not effective in deterring drug use among young people;
- Drug testing is expensive, taking away scarce dollars from other, more effective programs that keep young people out of trouble with drugs;
- Drug testing can be legally risky, exposing schools to potentially costly litigation;
- Drug testing may drive students away from extracurricular activities, which are a proven means of helping students stay out of trouble with drugs;
- Drug testing can undermine trust between students and teachers, and between parents and children;
- Drug testing can result in false positives, leading to the punishment of innocent students;
- Drug testing does not effectively identify students who have serious problems with drugs; and
- Drug testing may lead to unintended consequences, such as students using drugs (like alcohol) that are more dangerous but less detectable by a drug test.

There *are* alternatives to drug testing that emphasize education, discussion, counseling and extracurricular activities, and that build trust between students and adults.

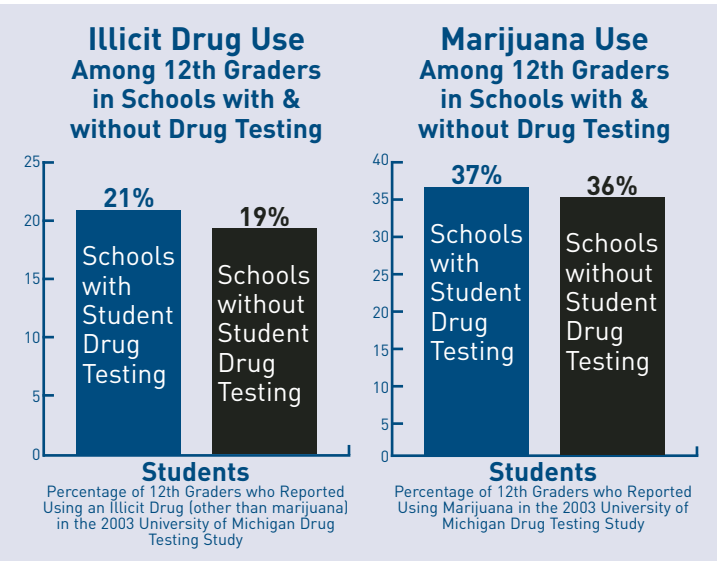
RANDOM DRUG TESTING DOES NOT DETER DRUG USE

Proponents assert the success of random student drug testing by citing a handful of reports from schools that anecdotally claim drug testing reduced drug use. The only formal study to claim a reduction in drug use was based on a snapshot of two schools and was suspended by the federal government for lack of sound methodology.^{1,2}

In a 2005 report evaluating the available evidence, Professor Neil McKeganey critiqued the methodology and biases of the studies repeatedly presented in support of random student drug testing, saying, “It is a matter of concern that student drug testing has been widely developed within the USA...on the basis of the slimmest available research evidence.”³

Largest National Study Shows Drug Testing Fails

The first large-scale national study on student drug testing found virtually no difference in rates of drug use between schools that have drug testing programs and those that do not.⁴ Based on data collected between 1998 and 2001 from 76,000 students nationwide in 8th, 10th and 12th grades, the study found that drug testing did not



have an impact on illicit drug use among students, including athletes.

Dr. Lloyd D. Johnston, an author of the study, directs *Monitoring the Future*, the leading survey by the federal government of trends in student drug use and attitudes about drugs. According to Dr. Johnston, “[The study] suggests that there really isn’t an impact from drug testing as practiced...I don’t think it brings about any constructive changes in their attitudes about drugs or their belief in the dangers associated with using them.”⁵ Published in the April 2003 *Journal of School Health*, the study was conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan and funded in part by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Follow-Up Study Confirms Results: Drug Testing Fails

The researchers at the University of Michigan conducted a more extensive study later that year with an enlarged sample of schools, an additional year of data and an increased focus on random testing programs.⁶ The updated results reinforced their previous conclusions:

So, does drug testing prevent or inhibit student drug use? Our data suggest that, as practiced in recent years in American secondary schools, it does not... The two forms of drug testing that are generally assumed to be most promising for reducing student drug use – random testing applied to all students... and testing of athletes – did not produce encouraging results.⁷

The follow-up study was published in 2003 as part of the Youth, Education and Society (YES) Occasional Papers Series sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The strongest predictor of student drug use, the studies’ authors note, is students’ attitudes toward drug use and their perceptions of peer use. The authors recommend policies that address “these key values, attitudes and perceptions” as effective alternatives to drug testing.⁸ The results of these national studies are supported by numerous other surveys and studies that examine the effectiveness of various options for the prevention of student drug misuse.⁹

WHO SAYS NO TO RANDOM DRUG TESTING?

A groundswell of opposition has emerged to random drug testing among school officials, experts, parents and state legislatures.

School Officials and Parents Say No to Drug Testing

We stopped testing because “we didn’t think it was the deterrent that we thought it would be...we didn’t think it was as effective with the money we spent on it.”

– Scot Dahl, President of school board in Guymon, Oklahoma¹⁰

We decided not to drug test because “it really is a parental responsibility...it is not our job to actually test [students].”

– Harry M. Ward, Superintendent in Mathews County, Virginia¹¹

“The concerns of parents [in opposing a student drug testing proposal] have ranged from the budgetary issues to losing our focus on education to creating a threatening environment.”

– Laura Rowe, President of Band Aids, a parent association of the high school band program in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin¹²

“We object to the urine-testing policy as an unwarranted invasion of privacy. We want school to teach our children to think critically, not to police them.”

– Hans York, parent and Deputy Sheriff in Wahkiakum, Washington¹³

“I would have liked to see healthy community participation that stimulates thoughtful interaction among us. Instead, this [drug testing] policy was steamrolled into place, powered by mob thinking.”

– Jackie Puccetti, parent in El Paso, Texas¹⁴



Educators and School Officials

The majority of school officials – including administrators, teachers, coaches, school counselors and school board members – have chosen not to implement drug testing programs. With their concerns rooted in knowledge and practical experience, school officials object to drug testing for a variety of reasons, including the cost of testing, the invasion of privacy and the unfair burden that student drug testing places on schools. For many educators and school officials, drug testing simply fails to reflect the reality of what works to establish safe school environments.

Experts

Physicians, social workers, substance abuse treatment providers and child advocates agree that student drug testing cannot replace pragmatic drug prevention measures, such as after-school activities. Many prominent national organizations representing these groups have come forward in court to oppose drug testing programs. These groups include the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Education Association, the American Public Health Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. These experts have stated: **“Our experience – and a broad body of relevant research – convinces us that a policy [of random student drug testing] *cannot* work in the way it is hoped to and will, for many adolescents, interfere with more sound prevention and treatment processes.”**¹⁵

Experts Say No to Drug Testing

“Social workers, concerned with a child’s well-being, question whether [drug testing] will do more harm than good...What is most effective in keeping kids away from drugs and alcohol are substance abuse prevention programs based on scientific research.”

– Elizabeth J. Clark, Ph.D., A.C.S.W., M.P.H., Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers¹⁶

“Protecting America’s youth from alcohol and drugs requires more than a simple drug test. We need a greater commitment to prevention and treatment...At-risk and marginal students need the support systems and mentoring relationships that extracurricular activities provide. Excluding students who test positive for drugs will likely exacerbate their problems.”

– Bill Burnett, President, the Association for Addiction Professionals¹⁷

“Let us not rush to accept the illusory view that drug testing in schools is the silver bullet for the prevention of youth substance abuse...While [drug tests] are increasing in popularity, their efficacy is unproven and they are associated with significant technical concerns.”

– Dr. John R. Knight, Director of the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children’s Hospital in Boston and Dr. Sharon Levy, Director of Pediatrics for the Adolescent Substance Abuse Program at Children’s Hospital in Boston¹⁸

The Oklahoma policy “falls short doubly if deterrence is its aim: It invades the privacy of students who need deterrence least, and risks steering students at greatest risk for substance abuse away from extracurricular involvement that potentially may palliate drug problems.”

– U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s Dissenting Opinion in Board of Education of Pottawatomie v. Earls¹⁹

Parents

Many parents oppose drug testing for the same reasons as school staff and administrators. In addition, some parents believe that schools are misappropriating their roles when they initiate drug testing programs. They believe that it is the role of parents, not schools, to make decisions about their children's health.

State Governments

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's 2002 decision that schools may randomly drug test students participating in competitive extracurricular activities, several state legislatures have opposed student drug testing after hearing community and expert concerns about privacy, confidentiality, potential liability and overall effectiveness. For example, the Hawaii legislature tabled a bill that would have established a drug testing pilot program at several public high schools.²⁰ In Louisiana, a bill was defeated that would have mandated drug testing state scholarship recipients.²¹

DRUG TESTING HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE CLASSROOM

Drug testing can undermine student-teacher relationships by pitting students against the teachers and coaches who test them, eroding trust and leaving students ashamed and resentful.

As educators know, student-teacher trust is critical to creating an atmosphere in which students can address their fears and concerns about drug use itself, as well as the issues that can lead to drug use, including depression, anxiety, peer pressure and unstable family life.²² Trust is jeopardized if teachers act as confidants in some circumstances but as police in others.

Drug testing also results in missed classroom instruction. Officials at some schools with testing programs reported that many students would flagrantly ridicule the testing process by stalling for hours to produce a urine sample – during which time they remained absent from class.²³

The Human Costs of Drug Testing: A Case in Point

Lori Brown of Texas felt her son was wronged by his school's random drug testing program. Seventeen-year-old Mike, an upstanding senior at Shallowater High School near Lubbock, Texas, was taking a number of medications for allergies, as well as some antibiotics, when his school randomly tested him. One of these antibiotics, his doctor later confirmed, can cause a false positive for cocaine. The school failed to properly follow their own policies by neglecting to ask Mike to list the medications he was taking. To make matters worse, South Plains Compliance, the drug testing company hired by the school to administer the tests, maintained that their procedures were 100 percent accurate despite the extenuating circumstances.

After the test came up positive for cocaine, Lori had Mike tested several times by their own physician for her own peace of mind. Each test confirmed what she already knew: Mike was not using cocaine. Lori defended her son, explaining to school authorities what she learned from Mike's doctor. But they refused to listen. Over the next six months, he was "randomly" picked for testing several more times and began to feel harassed and stigmatized as a result.

"In my opinion, schools are using the [drug] testing program as a tool to police students, when they should be concentrating on education," Lori says.

Finally, Lori and Mike had reached their emotional limit when a South Plains Compliance representative yelled at Mike for not producing enough urine for his sixth test. Together they decided to remove him from the drug testing program. As a result, Mike could no longer participate in extracurricular activities.

Problems with Different Types of Tests²⁴

School officials lack the expertise to determine which type of testing is more reliable.

Urine	Marijuana Cocaine Opiates Amphetamine PCP	\$10- \$50 per test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests commonly used in schools often do not detect alcohol or tobacco • Since marijuana stays in the body longer than other drugs, drugs like cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine often go undetected • Test is invasive and embarrassing • Specimen can be adulterated
Hair	Marijuana Cocaine Opiates Amphetamine PCP MDMA/ (Ecstasy)	\$60- \$75 per test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Cannot detect alcohol use • Will not detect very recent drug use • The test is discriminatory: dark-haired people are more likely to test positive than blondes, and African Americans are more likely to test positive than Caucasians • Passive exposure to drugs in the environment, especially those that are smoked, may lead to false positive results
Sweat Patch	Marijuana Cocaine Opiates Amphetamine PCP	\$20- \$50 per test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of labs able to process results • Passive exposure to drugs may contaminate patch and result in false-positives • People with skin eruptions, excessive hair, or cuts and abrasions cannot wear the patch
Saliva	Marijuana Cocaine Opiates Amphetamine PCP	\$10- \$50 per test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detects only very recent use and limited number of drugs • New technology; accuracy rates and testing guidelines not established

DRUG TESTING IS EXPENSIVE AND A WASTE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES

Drug testing costs schools an average of \$42 per student tested, which amounts to \$21,000 for a high school testing 500 students.²⁵ This figure is for the initial test alone and does not include the costs of other routine components of drug testing, such as additional tests throughout the year or follow-up testing.

The cost of drug testing often exceeds the total a school district spends on existing drug education, prevention and counseling programs combined. In fact, drug testing may actually take scarce resources away from the very health and treatment services needed by students who are misusing drugs.

The process for dealing with a positive test is usually long and involved; not only must a second test be done to rule out a false positive result, but treatment referral and follow-up systems must also be in place. In one school district, the cost of detecting the 11 students who tested positive amounted to \$35,000.²⁶

Cost-Benefit Analysis in Dublin, Ohio²⁷

In Dublin, Ohio, school administrators ended their drug testing program and hired two full time substance abuse counselors instead, concluding that drug testing reduces resources for more effective drug prevention programs.

	Drug Testing	Substance Abuse Counselor
Cost of program	\$35,000 per school year	\$32,000 annual starting salary per counselor
Number of students	Out of 1,473 students tested, 11 tested positive	Prevention programs for all 3,581 high school students incorporated in a weekly class curriculum
Cost per student	\$24 per student for drug test \$3,200 per student who tested positive	\$18 per student for drug prevention, education and intervention Intervention programs for all targeted students who need help

Beyond the initial costs, there are long-term operational and administrative expenses associated with student drug testing, including:

- Monitoring students' urination to collect accurate samples;
- Documentation, bookkeeping and compliance with confidentiality requirements; and
- Tort or other insurance to safeguard against potential lawsuits.



NOT ALL DRUG TESTING IS PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW

In 2002, by a margin of five to four, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Board of Education of Pottawatomie v. Earls* permitted public school districts to drug test students participating in competitive extracurricular activities. In its ruling, however, the Court only interpreted *federal* law. Schools are also subject to *state* law, which may provide greater protections for students' privacy rights. These laws vary greatly from state to state and, in many states, the law may not yet be well-defined by the courts.

Since the 2002 *Earls* decision, lawsuits have been filed in many states, including Indiana, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington, challenging school districts' drug testing policies.²⁸ Most of these school districts will spend thousands of taxpayer dollars battling these lawsuits with no guarantee of success.

U.S. Supreme Court DID NOT Say...

- **The Court DID NOT say that schools are required to test students involved in competitive extracurricular activities.**
- **The Court DID NOT say drug testing of all students or specific groups of students outside of those participating in competitive extracurricular activities (i.e. student drivers) is constitutional.**
- **The Court DID NOT say it is constitutional to drug test elementary school children.**
- **The Court DID NOT say that it is constitutional to test by means other than urinalysis.**
- **The Court DID NOT say that schools are protected from lawsuits under their respective state laws.**

What National Experts Said to the U.S. Supreme Court²⁹

A mandatory drug testing policy “injects the school and its personnel, unnecessarily, into a realm where parental and medical judgment should be preeminent.”

– *American Academy of Pediatrics, et al.*

School drug testing policies often operate “in disregard for prevention and treatment principles that doctors and substance abuse experts view as fundamental...”

– *American Public Health Association, et al.*

“There is growing recognition that extracurricular involvement plays a role in *protecting* students from substance abuse and other dangerous health behaviors.”

– *National Education Association, et al.*

The risk that testing students for illicit drugs “will be understood to signal that alcohol and tobacco are of lesser danger is not an idle concern.”

– *National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, et al.*

ADDRESSING STEROIDS

The use of anabolic steroids and other performance enhancing supplements by professional athletes has prompted legislators and other policymakers to address steroid use among adolescents. On the surface, random drug testing appears to be a viable, effective deterrent to many. Research, however, does not support this approach. As with other forms of drug testing, those targeting steroids have not proven to be an effective means of reducing use. Further, steroid testing impairs the relationship of trust between students, parents, coaches and other school administrators.

Special Considerations for a Steroids Testing Regime

Testing Does Not Adequately Address the Problem

Most steroid tests do not detect other performance enhancing supplements, and the more substances that are added to a test, the higher the cost.³⁰ Also, testing does not reach all of those adolescents who are using steroids, as more than one-third of adolescent users do not participate in school sports.³¹ For those who do participate in sports, testing is a poor substitute for learning and appreciating the value of fair play.

Testing Is Prohibitively Expensive

The average test ranges from \$100 to \$200 per test.³² The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reported that a local coach estimated steroid tests for his football team would cost \$7,000. He commented, “And I have a budget of \$9,000. You know what [drug testing] would do to sports at this school? It would shut us down.”³³ As Robert F. Kanaby, Executive Director of the National Federation of State High School Associations, observes, **“We must recognize that in an era of scarce resources, steroid testing is way down on [the] budgetary pecking order for most school districts. This is particularly true if there is another good way to address the problem, and there is.”**³⁴

Alternatives to Steroid Testing

Whenever a school considers implementing a testing program, it should first consider education and prevention alternatives, which have a proven track record and reach a broader range of students. These programs also provide students with improved sports nutrition skills, a greater ability to refuse an offer of steroids as well as less desire to engage in future use of steroids. Two effective and proven programs are Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids (ATLAS) and Athletes Targeting Healthy Exercise and Nutrition Alternatives (ATHENA).³⁵

Another approach schools should consider is increased or mandatory coach education about steroids and other performance enhancing supplements. As a general rule, coaches should neither offer nor encourage the use of any substance having negative or undetermined effects on adolescent health. Coaches, not students, should be the focus of administrative disciplinary actions and be held responsible for sustaining an environment that promotes individual health and the value of fair play.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING IS A BARRIER TO JOINING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Random drug testing is typically directed at students who want to participate in extracurricular activities, including athletics, which have proven among the most effective pathways to preventing adolescent drug use. However, all too often drug testing policies actually prevent students from engaging in these activities.



Research shows a vastly disproportionate incidence of adolescent drug use and other dangerous behavior occurs during the unsupervised hours between the end of classes and parents' arrival home in the evening.³⁶

Research also shows that students who participate in extracurricular activities are:

- Less likely to develop substance abuse problems;
- Less likely to engage in other dangerous behavior such as violent crime; and
- More likely to stay in school, earn higher grades, and set and achieve more ambitious educational goals.³⁷

In addition, after-school programs offer students who are experimenting with or misusing drugs productive activities as well as contact with teachers, coaches and peers, who can help them identify and address problematic drug use.

The Tulia Independent School District, one of the many districts facing heightened public concerns about privacy and confidentiality, has seen a dramatic reduction in student participation in extracurricular activities since implementing drug testing.³⁸ One female student explains:

“I know lots of kids who don’t want to get into sports and stuff because they don’t want to get drug tested. That’s one of the reasons I’m not into any [activity]. Cause...I’m on medication, so I would always test positive, and then they would have to ask me about my medication, and I would be embarrassed. And what if I’m on my period? I would be too embarrassed.”³⁹



DRUG TESTING RESULTS IN FALSE POSITIVES THAT PUNISH INNOCENT STUDENTS

A positive drug test can be a devastating accusation for an innocent student. The most widely used drug screening method, urinalysis, will falsely identify some students as illicit drug users when they are not actually using illicit drugs, because drug testing does not necessarily distinguish between drug metabolites with similar structures. For example:

- Over-the-counter decongestants may produce a positive result for amphetamine.⁴⁰
- Codeine can produce a positive result for heroin.⁴¹
- Food products with poppy seeds can produce a positive result for opiates.⁴²

Violating Confidentiality

When Tecumseh High School in Oklahoma enacted its random drug testing program, the school failed to ensure the protection of private information concerning prescription drug use submitted under the testing policy. The choir teacher, for instance, looked at students' prescription drug lists and inadvertently left them where other students could see them. The results of a positive test, too, were disseminated to as many as 13 faculty members at a time. Other students figured out the results when a student was abruptly suspended from his/her activity shortly after the administration of a drug test.⁴³ This not only violates students' privacy rights, but can also lead to costly litigation.

Out of a desire to eliminate the possibility for false positives, schools often ask students to identify their prescription medications before taking a drug test. This both compromises students' privacy rights and creates an added burden for schools to ensure that students' private information is safely guarded.

DRUG TESTING IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS WITH A DRUG PROBLEM

Drug testing says very little about who is misusing or abusing drugs. Thousands of students might be tested in order to detect a tiny fraction of those who may have used the drugs covered by the test. Additionally, students misusing other harmful substances not detected by drug tests will not be identified. If schools rely on drug testing, they may undervalue better ways of detecting young people who are having problems with drugs. Most often, problematic drug use is discovered by learning to recognize its common symptoms. Properly trained teachers, coaches and other school officials can identify symptoms of a potential drug problem by paying attention to such signs as student absences, erratic behavior, changes in grades and withdrawal from peers.

First, Ask These Hard Questions

- **Has the drug test been proven to identify students likely to have future problems and to clear those who will not?**
- **Have schools been proven to be more appropriate or cost-effective places to perform these tests than a doctor's office?**
- **Are resources in place to assist students who fail the test, regardless of health insurance status or parental income?**
- **Is the financial interest of a proprietary firm behind the test's promotion?**
- **Is the school staff using precious time to elicit parental permission, explain the test, make the referrals and assure follow-up?**

Adapted from the American Association of School Administrators' website⁴⁴

DRUG TESTING HAS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Students may turn to more dangerous drugs or binge drinking.

Because marijuana is the most detectable drug, with traces of THC remaining in the body for weeks, students may simply take drugs that exit the body quickly, like methamphetamine, MDMA (Ecstasy) or inhalants.⁴⁵ Knowing



alcohol is less detectable, they may also engage in binge drinking, creating health and safety risks for students and the community as a whole.

Students can outsmart the drug test.

Students who fear being caught by a drug test may find ways to cheat the test, often by purchasing products on the Internet. A quick Internet search for “pass drug test” yields nearly four million hits, linking students to websites selling drug-free replacement urine, herbal detoxifiers, hair follicle shampoo and other products designed to beat drug tests. Students may also try dangerous home remedies. The president of the school board for Guymon, Oklahoma, described a frantic parent who had caught her daughter drinking bleach;⁴⁶ the district’s drug testing program was subsequently abandoned. In one Louisiana school district, students who were facing a hair test shaved their heads and body hair, making a mockery of the drug testing program.⁴⁷

Students learn that they are guilty until proven innocent.

Students are taught that under the U.S. Constitution people are presumed innocent until proven guilty and have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Random testing undermines both lessons; students are assumed guilty until they can produce a clean urine sample with no regard for their privacy rights.

ALTERNATIVES TO STUDENT DRUG TESTING

The current push to increase drug testing comes from the drug testing industry as well as well-intentioned educators and parents frustrated by the lack of success of drug prevention programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE).⁴⁸ However, there are more effective ways to keep teens out of trouble with drugs.

Engage Students in After-School Programs

Schools and local communities should help engage students in extracurricular activities and athletics, as these are among the best deterrents to drug misuse.

Incorporate Reality-Based Drug Education into the School Curriculum

Drugs of all sorts abound in our society. We are constantly confronted by a wide variety of substances with recreational and medicinal uses that can be purchased over-the-counter, by prescription and illegally. Since our decisions about drugs of all kinds should be based on complete, accurate information, quality drug education should be incorporated into a broad range of science disciplines, including physiology, chemistry and biology as well as psychology, history and sociology. Drug education should avoid dishonest scare tactics and should also recognize the wide spectrum of drug use and misuse, and the reasons why young people might choose to use (or not use) drugs.

Provide Counseling

Schools should provide counseling for students who are using drugs in a way that is causing harm to themselves or others. An emerging model that stresses relationships between students and counselors is that of a comprehensive Student Assistance Program (SAP).⁴⁹ Such a program advocates a mix of prevention, education and intervention. Counselors who teach about drugs can remain an important resource for students after the formal session ends, while trained student counselors can engage those students who feel more comfortable talking about their problems with peers.⁵⁰

Allow Students to be Assessed and Treated by Healthcare Professionals

Schools can refer students to healthcare professionals who can play a role in screening, intervening and referring adolescents to treatment. Several screening tools other than urinalysis, such as questionnaires, are available to healthcare professionals in diagnosing drug abuse among adolescents.⁵¹

Encourage Parents to Become Better Informed

Informed parents play a key role in preventing and detecting student drug misuse, so they should learn as much as they can. Schools can encourage parents to open a dialogue when adolescents are first confronted with alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, usually in middle school. At this point, “drug talks” should be two-way conversations. It is important for parents to teach, as well as learn from, their children.⁵²



Cultivate Trust and Respect Among Students and Adults

Trust and respect are perhaps the most important elements of relationships with teens. Young people who enjoy the confidence of their parents and teachers, and who are expected to assume responsibility for their actions, are the most likely to act responsibly. They need to practice responsibility while in high school, where they have a crucial parental and school safety net.

The combination of these methods will help ensure that students:

- **Receive comprehensive, science-based information;**
- **Receive help when they need it; and**
- **Stay busy and involved in productive activities when the school day ends.**

RESOURCES

Studies on Students, Drug Testing and/or After-School Activities

Neil McKeganey, *Random Drug Testing of Schoolchildren: A Shot in the Arm or a Shot in the Foot for Drug Prevention?* (York, UK: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005). Available at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/details.asp?pubID=666>.

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Julie Pederson and others, "The Potential of After-School Programs" in *Safe and Smart: Making After-School Hours Work for Kids* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). Available at: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/index.html>.

Nicholas Zill, Christine Winqvist Nord, and Laura Spencer Loomis, "Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1995). Available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/cyp/xstimuse.htm>.

Recommended Reading and Viewing

Rodney Skager, Ph.D., *Beyond Zero Tolerance: A Reality-Based Approach to Drug Education and Student Assistance* (San Francisco, CA: Drug Policy Alliance, 2005). This 23-page booklet offers educators an approach to secondary school drug education that is honest, interactive and cost-effective. The booklet also addresses student assistance and restorative practices as an alternative to punitive zero tolerance policies. Order your copy at: <http://www.beyondzerotolerance.org>.

Brave New Films, *The ACLU Freedom Files: The Supreme Court* (2005) is a television show featuring the story of Lindsay Earls, the high school sophomore who opposed her school's drug testing policy for violating her privacy. Screen the half-hour program online and see how she stood up for her beliefs in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. Lindsay Earls was a student at Tecumseh High School, a member of the debate team and a performer in the choir, when a mandatory drug testing policy was instituted for anyone participating in extracurricular activities. She opposed the order as an unconstitutional invasion of her privacy in *Board of Education of Pottawatomie v. Earls*. The show traces the Earls' family experience and gives an insider's view of the high court and the justices who serve on it. Available at: <http://www.aclu.tv/supreme>.

Andrew Weil, M.D. and Winifred Rosen, *From Chocolate to Morphine: Everything You Need to Know About Mind-Altering Drugs* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

Marsha Rosenbaum, Ph.D., *Safety First: A Reality-Based Approach to Teens, Drugs and Drug Education* (San Francisco, CA: Drug Policy Alliance, 2004). This 20-page booklet provides parents and educators with pragmatic ways to address teenage drug use. Order a hard copy or download a pdf version at <http://www.safety1st.org> in English, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew and Chinese. The Safety First website also contains "fact sheets" about drugs, strategies for talking with teens, news about teen drug use and drug education, an "Ask the Experts" column containing questions submitted by parents and educators, links to relevant sites, ordering information and more.

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Recommended Websites

“Drug Testing Fails” provides resources for parents, educators, coaches, and other interested and concerned adults, who believe that safe and trusting learning environments are critical to our young people's health and safety, and that student drug testing programs get in the way of creating that kind of environment. Available at: <http://www.drugtestingfails.org>.

“A Test You Can't Study For” is a special ACLU web feature on student drug testing that includes a guide for students, fact sheets, reports and other materials. Available at: <http://www.aclu.org/drugpolicy/testing/10845res20021021.html>.

Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), an organization with more than 115 college and high school chapters nationwide, is committed to providing education on harms caused by the war on drugs, working to involve youth in the political process, and promoting an open, honest and rational discussion of alternative solutions to our nation's drug problems. SSDP offers talking points, background materials and organizational assistance to students and families working to counteract drug testing programs in their school districts. Available at: <http://www.DAREgeneration.com>.

ENDNOTES

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For Your Notes

www.drugtestingfails.org



“As a pediatrician who works closely with schools, I know I can help students do their best when I believe in them and boost their strengths. I also know that school superintendents and principals want what is best and safest for their students. Random drug testing can seriously erode the trust that needs to exist between youth and important adults in their lives. This booklet will help school officials make an informed decision about random drug testing.”

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