



random student drug testing

Office of National Drug Control Policy 2007

What is Random Student Drug Testing?

- Random Student Drug Testing is a powerful prevention tool that gives students a credible reason to say no to drug use. Testing confidentially identifies students who have already started using drugs and directs them to counseling. It also helps to identify students who have progressed to addiction, so that they can receive treatment.

Why Randomly Test Students?

- Nearly half of all high school students have used an illegal drug by the time they are seniors. (MTF 2007)
- More teens enter drug treatment programs for marijuana than for all other illegal drugs combined. (TEDS)
- Students with an average grade of 'D' or below were at least four times more likely to have used marijuana in the past year.
- Random testing programs create a culture of disapproval and give young people an excuse to resist peer pressure to use drugs.

Drug Testing is Effective

- Many schools require testing for TB and other infectious diseases as a condition of enrollment. Screening for drug use extends these same protective procedures to the disease of addiction.
- Hunterdon Central High School in New Jersey reported a decrease in drug use after implementing a random testing program for its students.
- A Ball State University study in Indiana found that without testing, 85 % of Indiana principals reported an increase in drug use, and 518 students were suspended or expelled for drug or alcohol-related incidents. That figure dropped to 352 with random testing programs. (McKinney, Ball State University, 2003)
- School bus drivers, pilots, and many who work for private employers are already tested and are safer as a result. Employers who have followed the Federal drug testing model have seen a 67% drop in positive drug test.

Random Testing and Privacy: It Is Not a Violation

- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that drug testing must be done confidentially. Schools have a responsibility to respect students' privacy and to adhere to the Supreme Court ruling. It is vital that only the people who need to know the test results see them. The results should not be shared with anyone else, including teachers. The purpose is to deter use, intervene early with those who have just begun to use, and to provide professional help to those who have become dependent, not to expose and punish children for drug use.

Testing Programs Increase Participation in Extracurricular Activities

- Random drug testing programs level the playing field for students by creating a culture of safety and inclusion for students wishing to play sports and participate in club activities. One study conducted by the Oregon Health Sciences University revealed a 10 percent increase in extracurricular participation in schools with random drug testing programs. In Florida's Polk County schools, where athletes are randomly drug tested, 448 more students tried out for sports in 2005 than in 2004, and 319 more students tried out in 2004 compared to 2003.

Random Testing Helps Parents and Their Students

- Over 4,000 schools across the U.S. have already begun their own random testing programs.
- These random testing programs supplement existing drug education and prevention efforts.