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Why Drug Test Students?

The following are reasons schools are implementing Random Student Drug Testing programs:

To Deter & Prevent Drug Use

Drug tests give students one more good reason not to use illegal drugs. Students know that if they test positive for illegal drugs, they could miss athletic practices and games, be temporarily removed from a club to which they belong, or be subject to an evaluation. Students commonly use their school's drug testing program as a tool to stand up against peer pressure to use drugs.

To Identify Drug Problems Early

When illegal drug use is identified through drug testing, students and their families receive support, counseling, and follow-up testing to insure that the student becomes and stays drug-free. Early intervention and treatment are powerful weapons against addiction and the damage drug use poses to students, their families, their schools and their communities.

To Prevent Adolescent Addiction

Not only does almost all drug use begin during the teenage years, but teenagers become addicted more rapidly to drugs than do adults. Recovery is also more difficult. The National Center on Addiction and Substance abuse's 1997 Annual National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse reports that if children reach the age of 21 without abusing drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, they seldom start using drugs later on in life.

http://www.mediacampaign.org/whatsyourantidrug/fact_sheets_teens.html

To Help High Risk Groups

Since 2001, there has been a decline in the self-reported use of illegal drugs by students; however, the rates of use remain unacceptably high. The groups at most risk for illegal drug use are adolescents and young adults.

The following rates of use were reported by students in the 2007 Monitoring the Future Study:

Past 30-Day Use of:	8th Grade Students	10th Grade Students	12th Grade Students
Illicit Drugs	7.4%	16.9%	21.9%
Alcohol	15.9%	33.4%	44.4%

These same data show that the majority of high school students do not use alcohol or other illegal drugs. Even among high school seniors a majority of students had not used alcohol in the prior 30 days.

To Improve the Quality of School Education

Negative behavior associated with drug use including decreased motivation, falling grades, violence and student absence, cripple the learning process and adversely affect the entire student body. Through deterring drug use, RSDT programs help improve schools' learning environments, while also offering help to those students who are using illegal drugs to ensure that they stop drug use.

To Decrease Athletes' Risk of Injury

Vernonia School District v. Acton, 1995 Supreme Court case ruled in favor of Vernonia allowing the public schools to test athletes in a mandatory random testing program in part because drug use was determined to increase the risk of sports-related injuries.

Among other problems, stimulant use can be associated with feelings of invincibility characteristic of stimulant highs sometimes leading to more risky behaviors.

Reinforce all other Prevention Efforts

RSDT reinforces the no-drug-use messages of all other school and community drug prevention programs. Hand-in-hand with drug education and drug prevention campaigns, RSDT improves and strengthens the success of all prevention efforts. Far from being in conflict with drug education and other prevention efforts, RSDT reinforces and enhances all of them.

Prepare Students for Workplace Drug Tests

Students are likely to learn upon entering the workplace that drug use is unacceptable and that serious consequences are imposed if drug use is detected. Pre-employment drug tests are routine, just like the random tests of RSDT programs. However, in RSDT programs, if drug use is detected, a student does not lose his or her job (or get expelled from school); rather, an opportunity is offered for evaluation and treatment if needed.