

“It is very important to have public forums in order to gain input from parents, students, and the community.”

Report of a Preliminary Study: Elements of a Successful School-Based Student Drug Testing Program
http://www.datia.org/pdf_resources/SDT%20DUPONT%20STUDY.pdf

Step 2: Presenting the Idea and Establishing Relationships

Presenting the Idea

The planning process for implementing a student drug testing (SDT) program follows the accepted procedures for gaining approval from the appropriate school authority, superintendent, school board, principal/school director, etc. Usually, you must receive such approval prior to presenting an idea to the school community. After receiving approval you are ready to share your findings and receive feedback.

Establishing Relationships

If your plan for a student drug testing program is approved, the next step is to disseminate knowledge about student drug testing to the community. Using your research data and presentation materials to educate community members about the benefits of SDT as well as the demonstrated need you have identified in your school community.

Share all of your results and findings from “Step 1: Identifying the Need” and encourage feedback from others so that all concerns are heard before a student drug testing policy is created. Meet with small groups and relevant individuals to share your views and listen to their views.

Ask about their concerns and opinions

Ask for their support

Do not expect everyone to be supportive of the idea. Be respectful of those who disagree, but respond to their concerns and suggest solutions to any problems they express. It is often helpful to include the local medical and legal organizations, and local media outlets in this community outreach process.

Extend your network of contacts broadly and comprehensively.

The following examples show how these relationships may help build support for your student drug testing program:

Contacts	Benefits
School Officials	Contacts within or outside your school county that have already implemented a student drug testing program can provide valuable insight and support for your program.
Community coalitions and local businesses	Provide resources such as incentives or monetary donations to your program.
Law enforcement officials	Add credibility in meetings and gatherings about the consequences for students with substance abuse problems.
Legal counsels	Provide legal support and answer any questions pertaining to confidentiality and privacy issues that may surface during meetings.
Students	With their unique everyday experiences, students can provide fresh perspectives that parents or administrators may not have considered when developing policies and procedures.

Schools that have conducted informational sessions find it much easier to target small groups rather than large ones. One approach to conducting meetings is to hold them with subjectively-defined groupings of parents. For example, the meeting may include only parents of students participating in a certain athletic sport or other extracurricular activity.

Most parents will know other parents with children that have similar interests and may feel more comfortable voicing their opinion in a familiar environment. During these meetings, participants should be encouraged to express their specific concerns about drug use in the community as well as their recommended solutions.

An alternative to having group meetings is to meet individually to discuss your results and assess if a person is willing to join a task force and provide support.

Selecting a Task Force

The purpose of a task force is to create a permanent support system for implementing the SDT program. The task force should be comprised of a variety of representatives from the school environment as well as the surrounding community. These representatives are called key stakeholders and you will likely already recognize them as leaders of a particular group or organization. They do not necessarily have to be the head of the organization but they should be in a position to disseminate information to interested parties and the general public.

The task force will be responsible for developing the policy and procedures of your school's student drug testing program. Some of these key stakeholders may include but are not limited to:

- Parents
- Students
- Athletic coaches
- Extracurricular activity teachers
- Board of Education members
- Superintendent
- School public relations staff
- Local health care agency employees
- Local businesspeople
- Law enforcement officials
- Legal counsel
- Community coalition leaders
- Student Assistance Professionals
- School medical personnel

Keep in mind that building these relationships will help you maintain a strong, successful program. If there are high-profile representatives in your community, such as faith leaders or athletic coaches, invite them to be part of the process. These individuals may be natural motivators for the community.

Representatives from a variety of backgrounds should be invited to join the task force. It is recommended to have only a few (1 to 2) representatives from each group so that the task force will not be too large. You may find it helpful to form subcommittees within large task forces.

Student assistance professionals (SAPs) help students who are suffer from social or substance abuse problems. SAPs are often available to counsel students and provide drug education information. They meet with both parents and students, and may provide referrals to treatment facilities

Preparing for Step 3

Once you have received approval and support for your school's student drug testing program, your task force turn its attention to the details of how the program will function. The task force will need to develop policies and procedures so that the implementation process will flow easily. For this to occur, your program must be designed to fit your school's culture, your existing drug-free programs and your community's environment.