

Step 4: Implementing and Evaluating a Student Drug Testing Program

Preparing the School Community

It is important to make sure that the school community is aware of the upcoming SDT program prior to its implementation.

Announcement of the SDT program

Distribute information about the SDT program soon after the task force's policies and procedures are approved and create as many opportunities as possible for parents, guardians, educators, and community leaders to become aware of, and educated about, the program.

Meetings should be held with parents, coaches, extracurricular activity teachers, administrative staff, and others involved in the student drug testing process so that questions and concerns can be raised and answered.

For example, all parents with children on the basketball team could be convened as a group. The objective is to provide a comfortable small affinity group of parents and school administrators to discuss any concerns about student drug testing of particular relevance to that group of parents.

Near the start date, it may be helpful to distribute packets containing a copy of the SDT policy, consent forms and fact sheets about student drug testing so that all interested parties will be familiar with the rationale for the testing. Some schools include this information in the packets that are distributed to parents prior to the beginning of the school year.

Reminder to Administrative Staff

Consent forms will need to be signed and returned *prior* to the starting date for the testing.

Evaluating the Program

After the SDT program has been implemented, its evaluation allows administrators and budget analysts to determine if the program needs to be changed. It is important to remember that the primary impact of a SDT program is as a deterrent to drug use by students. In addition to quantifying testing results and cost, the initial needs assessment surveys should be compared with post-program implementation.

When evaluating a program, it is helpful to keep in mind the following measures:

- *Cost* – Cost of the tests, of administering the tests, and of managing the program
- *Time* – How much time the staff devotes to the program
- *Record* – What records and files must be kept. For instance:
 - How many drug tests are performed each year?
 - How many students are tested?
 - How many positive drug tests occurred?
 - Were there any cases of false positives?
 - What were the outcomes of positive tests?
 - What drugs were prevalent?
 - How many students who tested positive succeeded in becoming and staying drug-free?
- *Feedback* – Does the school faculty and administration perceive a change in the behavior and academic success of the student body? Do families consider the SDT program to be helpful? Do the students themselves feel that the program has made a positive change in the school? It is a good idea to survey faculty, students and parents about the program to measure the impact that it has made. The needs assessment process survey may also be used again as a mechanism for measuring self-reported changes in drug use as well as attitudinal changes of the students. Most schools report only a few positive drug tests in any given year. When reporting these data, care should be taken to omit any identifying information in order to preserve the confidentiality of the student or students involved.

These assessments should be performed annually: A report should be generated highlighting the results of the last year and a comparison made to past years, and include suggestions for improvements. If the reporting process becomes burdensome, it may be possible to enlist support from a local university.

Make the annual report public as a means to educate and keep the community aware of the ongoing student drug testing program, and share the findings with all key stakeholders in the community

Completing the Toolkit

By the time you have completed these steps you will have implemented a successful student drug testing program. Please visit our online resources for further information regarding student drug testing. If you have any questions, contact us via Email and visit our Student Drug Testing website at:

<http://www.preventionnotpunishment.org>.