

# WEST PLATTE SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT DRUG TESTING PROGRAM

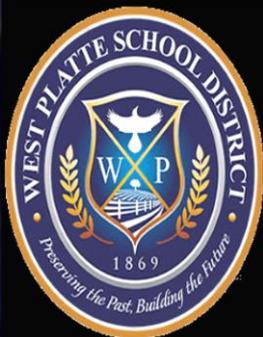
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# THAT'S ME!!!! NEED TO KNOW THE AUDIENCE

- TEACHER / BUILDING LEVEL PERSONNEL
  - ADMINISTRATOR
  - SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS







**DRUG  
FREE  
SCHOOL  
ZONE**



# WHAT IS DRUG TESTING?

Some schools, hospitals, or places of employment conduct drug testing. There are a number of ways this can be done, including: pre-employment testing, random testing, reasonable suspicion/cause testing, post-accident testing, return to duty testing, and follow-up testing. This usually involves collecting urine samples to test for drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, PCP, and opiates.

# IS RANDOM DRUG TESTING OF STUDENTS LEGAL?

In June 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court broadened the authority of public schools to test students for illegal drugs. Voting 5 to 4 in *Pottawatomie County v. Earls*, the court ruled to allow random drug tests for all middle and high school students participating in competitive extracurricular activities. The ruling greatly expanded the scope of school drug testing, which previously had been allowed only for student athletes.

Currently, nearly 100 Schools in Missouri have implemented Student Drug Testing Programs.

# WHY SOME SCHOOLS CHOOSE TO CONDUCT RANDOM DRUG TESTING...

Schools that have adopted random student drug testing are hoping to decrease drug abuse among students via two routes.

First, schools that conduct testing hope that random testing will serve as a deterrent, and give students a reason to resist peer pressure to take drugs.

Secondly, drug testing can identify adolescents who have started using drugs so that interventions can occur early, or identify adolescents who already have drug problems, so they can be referred for treatment. Drug abuse not only interferes with a student's ability to learn, but it can also disrupt the teaching environment, affecting other students as well.

# RANDOM STUDENT DRUG TESTING IN BRIEF

1. Board of Education Approves the Policy
2. Students Participating in Extracurricular Activities Covered by the Policy Submit to Testing
2. District Employs an Outside Testing Company to Conduct Tests and Sets Unannounced Dates Throughout the School Year and School Administration Facilitates the Process
3. Students are Assigned a Random Number and are Randomly Selected by the Testing Company for Each Testing Cycle
4. Students Are Tested Via Urinalysis or Saliva Testing in a Private Setting
5. Negative Results Are Disposed. Non-Negative Results Are Split and Sent to A Lab For Full Analysis.
6. Procedural Safeguards Are Exercised.
7. Positive Tests Result in a Graduated Scale of Consequences in the Form of Lost Privileges to Participate in Identified Extracurricular Activities and Events.

# SO WHAT ABOUT EMPLOYEES?

Currently, state law holds that school districts may conduct three types of drug testing for employees:

1. Pre-employment screening – as a condition of employment.
2. Tests based on reasonable suspicion.
3. Testing for safety sensitive positions, such as bus drivers and operators of machinery.

To date, I am not aware of any district that has implemented an employee random drug testing program.

# OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

1. Determine Need and Assess Board Support
  2. Establish Timeline AND assess timing
  3. Establish Draft Policy and Procedures
  4. Introduce and Educate Board, Students, Parents, Community
  5. Host Community Forums and Invite Public Input
  6. Revise and Approve Policy (address consequences)
  7. Over Prepare for Implementation
  8. Follow Up and Assess
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# 1. DETERMINE NEED AND ASSESS BOARD SUPPORT

Assessing the need is often easy to accomplish and can occur in a variety of ways.

One of the easiest tools is the use of the Missouri Student Survey, which is administered every two years in all Missouri High Schools.

Other local survey data may also be collected and combined with perceptual data and quantitative student discipline/legal data to assess need.

Assessing support, on the other hand, can be slightly more challenging. Due to the highly controversial nature of this program, expect that varying views will be shared in an often very public and very emotional manner.

Ensure that the Board and Administration are prepared to weather the probably political storm prior to committing to the program.



## 2. ESTABLISH TIMELINE AND ASSESS TIMING

- Student Survey Spring 2013
- Board of Education Discussion and Commitment – Summer Retreat 2013- Draft Policy Provided
- Second Policy Review by Board of Education August 2013
- Community Forums August 2013
- Board Action September 2013
- Student Enrollment September 20 through October 12
- First Testing November 1 (Announced)
  
- Assess Timing – Consider other factors which may impact public perception.

### 3. ESTABLISH DRAFT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A number of steps may be taken to draft the policy and administrative procedure. Clearly, legal advice from your school attorney and/or district's policy provider is step one.

A district may also choose to gather policies from other districts who have implemented the program. Each district likely has very similar standard policy language. However, each will most likely also have unique variations, especially in regard to the consequences and administrative procedures.

Draft the variables of the policy and procedure in a manner that will align to the intent and goal of the Board.

## 4. INTRODUCE AND EDUCATE BOARD, STUDENTS, PARENTS, COMMUNITY

First, educate the Board of the draft policy. Provide a full copy of the drafts to the Board and request feedback. Work to gain consensus and seek out any points of contention. If possible, address these prior to the public engagement.

Introducing the program to parents in writing is a wise option, because it is documentable and is a practical way to convey the technical details of the program. Be certain to include the options which have been planned for public input, and also consider inviting written feedback.

Introducing the program to students may work best in person. Consider holding grade-level meetings with the admin team at which time details of the program may be shared and questions may be answered. Consider surveying the students on their support of the program. You may be surprised what you discover.



## 5. HOST COMMUNITY FORUMS AND INVITE PUBLIC INPUT

Public forums are becoming more common for a variety of issues. On this particular issue, there continues to be much misinformation and pre conceived notions that are simply not factual. These forums provide an opportunity to educate the public on facts, while also providing an opportunity to assess the public's (vocal) support.

Consider inviting in an expert from the Professional Testing Company to overview the technical portion of the process in detail, including the number of safeguards which will be in place to protect students; including protection against false positives.

Consider inviting in local health professionals to speak in regard to the prevalence and consequences of drug use among teens.

As in most situations, the use of experts can often reassure patrons who are in support of the program, while also diffusing those patrons who may arrive prepared to play the "gotcha" game with the school officials.

## 6. Revise and Approve Policy (address consequences)

Aside from the procedural safeguards that will be included in any quality policy, the most likely point of contention will center around the consequences and the perceived public awareness of a positive test.

Be prepared to be presented with public opinions ranging from no consequence for a positive test though imprisonment for life.

Consider options for reduced sentencing as portion of the policy. For instance, a first offense 30 day suspension may be reduced to 15 days upon completion of a substance abuse education course.

Be cautious of obligating the district to providing or paying for any such services as this could place the district in a position of legal liability. Consider reimbursements for economically disadvantaged families.

Belabor both the policy and the administrative procedure to ensure a clear understanding by all involved.

# 7. OVER PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In education, every day is an adventure. As you plan for the first and subsequent testing sessions, be attentive to details and plan in advance.

1. Be discrete and protect student anonymity.
2. Select the most appropriate area and ensure it is prepared for the testing.
3. Include a waiting area and access to bottled water.
4. Team up. Ensure more than one administrator / faculty member is present for the testing process.
5. Plan time to allow follow up calls to the parents of each participant immediately following the test.

## 8. FOLLOW UP AND ASSESS

As with all programs, follow up and assessment is critical.

Clearly defined administrative procedures should be established, along with all necessary draft language for all correspondence. This will assist in avoiding lost or misinterpreted practices as changes in administration or staffing occur.

Don't underestimate the value of qualitative input from parents, teachers, students, and community. Sometimes, this can be some of the most valuable data pieces available to assess the impact and effectiveness of the program.

Report assessment findings publicly.

# DRUG TESTING IS NOT A STAND ALONE PROGRAM

Drug testing should never be undertaken as a stand-alone response to a drug problem. If testing is done, it should be a component of broader prevention, intervention and treatment programs, with the common goal of reducing students' drug use.

D.A.R.E. has been in place for a number of years at West Platte.

Counseling is available at West Platte and we have resources in place to make referrals as needed.

Other policies have been in place for a number of years to address disciplinary procedures for students who attend school under the influence.

Community 2000 has taking actions to deter and prevent drug use at West Platte.

This policy is a next logical step in this process

## IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR DRUGS, SHOULD THAT STUDENT FACE DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES?

The primary purpose of drug testing is not to punish students who use drugs but to prevent drug abuse and to help students already using become drug-free. The results of a positive drug test should be used to intervene with students who do not yet have drug problems, through counseling and follow-up testing. For students that are diagnosed with addiction, parents and a school administrator can refer them to effective drug treatment programs, to begin the recovery process.

The policy should NOT result in any disciplinary consequences or mandated loss of instructional time. The policy should only impact a student's ability to participate in extracurricular activities and/or to use campus parking.

## WHICH DRUGS CAN BE TESTED?

Various testing methods normally test for a "panel" of drugs. Typically, a drug panel tests for marijuana, cocaine, opioids, amphetamines, and PCP. If a school has a particular problem with other drugs, such as steroids, they can include testing for these drugs as well.

The use of synthetic panels is encouraged, to keep from shifting students from tested drugs to non-tested drugs.

# WHAT ABOUT ALCOHOL?

Alcohol is a drug, and its use is a serious problem among young people.

However, alcohol does not remain in the blood long enough for most tests to detect recent use.

Breathalyzers and oral fluid tests can detect current use. Adolescents with substance abuse problems are often polydrug users (they use more than one drug) so identifying a problem with an illicit or prescription drug may also suggest an alcohol problem.

## **HOW ACCURATE ARE DRUG TESTS? IS THERE A POSSIBILITY A TEST COULD GIVE A FALSE POSITIVE?**

Tests are very accurate but not 100 percent accurate. Samples should be divided so that if an initial test is positive a confirmation test can be conducted if needed. Federal guidelines are in place to ensure accuracy and fairness in drug testing programs.

**JUST BECAUSE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT SAID STUDENT DRUG TESTING FOR ADOLESCENTS IN COMPETITIVE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IS CONSTITUTIONAL, DOES THAT MEAN IT IS LEGAL IN MY CITY OR STATE?**

A school or school district that is interested in adopting a student drug testing program should seek legal expertise so that it complies with all federal, state, and local laws. Individual state constitutions may dictate different legal thresholds for allowing student drug testing. Communities interested in starting student drug testing programs should become familiar with the law in their respective states to ensure proper compliance.

# DRUG FREE

SCHOOL

FAMILY

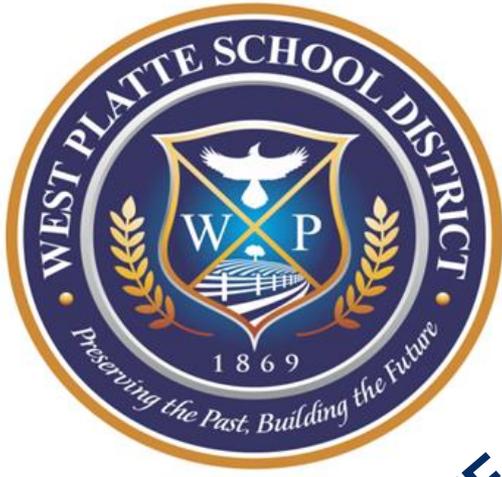
HEALTH

DRUG FREE

FRIENDS

FUTURE

# IT'S UP TO ME!



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