



# Butler County Drug & Alcohol Program

## Fact Sheet : School-based Drug Testing

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- The greatest pressure on young people to start using drugs comes from their peers, not drug pushers. An important part of promoting a culture that supports healthy, drug-free choices by young people requires providing disincentives to using drugs; of which drug testing is one example.
- School-based drug testing programs are non-punitive, though consequences for illegal drug use should be part of any testing program.
- In addition to creating a culture of disapproval toward drugs in communities where it is employed, student drug testing achieves three public health goals: 1) deters students from initiating drug use; 2) identifies students who have just started using drugs so that parents and counselors can intervene early; and 3) helps identify students who have a dependency on drugs so that they can be referred to effective drug treatment.
- In June 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court broadened the authority of public schools to allow random drug tests for all middle & high school students participating in "privileged activities" such as sports, clubs and permit parking, although some schools actively recruit students to voluntarily enter the testing program, even if they are not enrolled in extracurricular activities.
- Voluntary school-based, drug screening programs offers positive incentives & builds peer support for non-users, encourages students to abstain from the use of drugs & alcohol and are being implemented as an alternative to traditional drug screening/testing programs.
- School-based, suspicionless drug testing is legal. However, it is unconstitutional unless:
  - evidence gathered proves a D&A problem exists in the school
  - the specific D&A problem is identified
  - schools prove a need for a policy and verifies its basis specifically addresses the identified problem
  - schools prove the policy targets the right students\*\*
- School-based, suspicionless drug testing, if determined a reasonable means of furthering a school district's drug prevention program, does not violate Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution\* (Westlaw, Supreme Court, Justice Thomas, Board of Education of Independent School district No. 92 June 27, 2002).
- President Bush has requested \$15 million for random testing programs for Fiscal Year 2007.
- Applications for federal grants for drug testing programs in schools are available at [OSDFSdrugtesting@ed.gov](mailto:OSDFSdrugtesting@ed.gov). U.S. Department of Education, OSDFS, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Rm. 3E251 Washington, DC 20202-6450, Ph. # (202) 260-3954
- Because tests (screenings) are not 100% accurate, every positive screen should be followed by a laboratory-based confirming test.
- Urinalysis is the most common drug testing method & is proven to be the most accurate & reliable (Refer to chart outlining pros & cons of various drug tests).
- Many popular magazines and internet sites provide advice on how to "detoxify their systems" and/or dilute urine samples, but most masking products do not work, are costly, and are almost always easily identified in the testing process.

- **Drug testing is commonly a 4-step process: collection, screening, confirmation, and review.**
  - **Collection – test administrator gives instructions & receives specimen**
  - **Specimen is then screened for drugs or drug metabolites (onsite or at a laboratory).**
  - **Positives are confirmed by a more exacting test**
  - **Positives are then reviewed by a physician/nurse to rule out legitimate prescription use.**
- **Negatives are eliminated from further consideration.**
- **If a student tests positive for drugs, the school’s next crucial step is to contact the students’ parents to work together toward stopping their child’s drug use.**
- **Following a positive screening, occasional users are often deterred from future drug use with education/support from school guidance counselors/ parents/ & Student Assistance Teams and/or the prospect of future drug tests. More frequent users, or those in danger of becoming drug dependent, should be referred to treatment.**
- **The price of drug testing varies according to the type of test & drugs involved. Generally cost is between \$10 & \$30 per test. Hair testing is slightly higher. Onsite alcohol tests range from \$1 to \$10 per test. Some schools pay for drug test through Federal Grants or private foundations.**
- **PA School Boards Association attorneys recommend school districts considering drug testing address the following: testing and the nature of the intrusion must balance with student’s privacy interest, notification of drug testing with specific groups of students, reasons for testing must be established, and Search & Seizure – 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment – permits districts to require drug testing as part of the return to school after a policy violation.**
- **When Developing & Implementing a School-based Drug Testing Program?**
  - **Determine whether there is a real need for testing via student drug-use surveys, teacher & other school staff reports, parents & other community members’ reports, drug paraphernalia/drug residue discoveries...**
  - **Know what kind of drugs students are using in their school**
  - **Confidentiality with students & parents. Schools have a responsibility to respect students’ privacy**
- **After 2 years of implementing a Random Student Drug Testing (RSDT) Program, an Indiana student & principal 2005 survey indicated: 73% HS Principals reported a decrease in drug usage (compared to a period without RSDT) among students subject to policy, a 41% decrease in positive drug results, 0% reduction and 46% increase in interscholastic athletics, 0% decrease and 45% increase in extracurricular activities participation, and 58% students cited a decrease in drug usage (Indiana Univ. School of Law).**
- **Stand Tall & Other “Reward for Staying Clean” Programs: statistics indicate significant reductions in drug use in schools where these programs have been implemented.**
- **Peers Are Staying Straight (PASS) Autauga County, Alabama – drug use among 8<sup>th</sup> graders dropped from 35.9% to 24.4% (nicotine), 39.9 % to 30% for alcohol, and 18.5% to 11.8% for marijuana.**

\*Amendment IV: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

| <u>Type of Test</u> | <u>Pros</u>  | <u>Cons</u>  | <u>Window of Detection</u>  |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Urine</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highest assurance of reliable results</li> <li>-Least expensive</li> <li>-Most flexibility in testing different drugs</li> <li>-Most likely of all drug-testing methods to withstand legal challenge</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Specimen can be adulterated, substituted, or diluted</li> <li>-Limited window of detection</li> <li>-Viewed as invasive/embarrassing</li> </ul>  | -Typically 1 to 5 days  |
| <b>Hair</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Longer window of detection</li> <li>-Greater stability (does not deteriorate)</li> <li>-Can measure chronic drug use</li> <li>-Convenient shipping &amp; storage</li> <li>-Not considered invasive/embarrassing</li> <li>-More difficult to adulterate than urine</li> <li>-Detects alcohol/cocaine combination</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More expensive</li> <li>-test usually limited to basic 5-drug panel</li> <li>-Cannot detect alcohol use</li> <li>-Will not detect very recent drug use (1 to 7 days prior to test)</li> </ul>                                | -Depends on the length of hair in the sample. Hair grows about a ½ inch per month, so a 1 ½ inch specimen would show a 3-month history. |
| <b>Oral Fluids</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sample obtained under direct viewing</li> <li>-Minimal risk of tampering</li> <li>-Non-invasive</li> <li>-Samples collected easily in virtually any environment</li> <li>-Can detect alcohol use</li> <li>-Reflects recent drug use</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Drugs &amp; drug metabolites do not remain in oral fluids as long as they do in urine</li> <li>-Less efficient than other testing methods in detecting marijuana use</li> </ul>  | -Approximately 10 to 24 hours   |
| <b>Sweat Patch</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Non-invasive</li> <li>-Variable removal date (about 1 to 7 days)</li> <li>-Quick application &amp; removal</li> <li>-Longer window of detection than urine</li> <li>-No sample substitution possible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Limited # of labs able to process results</li> <li>-People with skin eruptions, excessive hair, cuts or abrasions can not wear it.</li> <li>-Passive exposure to drugs may contaminate patch &amp; affect results</li> </ul> | -Retains evidence of drug use for at least 7days & can detect even low levels of drugs 2 to 5 hours after last use.                     |

## Resources

Office of National Drug Control Policy

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/studentdrugtesting/index.html>

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/studentdrugtesting/JudgePittsburgh.pdf>

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/studentdrugtesting/BerryRushBuckholdr.pdf>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

The Drug-Free Communities Program

[www.drugfreecommunities.samhsa.gov](http://www.drugfreecommunities.samhsa.gov)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: [www.samhsa.gov/csap](http://www.samhsa.gov/csap)

Center for substance abuse Treatment: [www.samhsa.gov/csaf](http://www.samhsa.gov/csaf)

National Institute on Drug Abuse [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program ( Us dept of Ed)

[www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/index.html)

The Anti-Drug.com: [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

Freevibe.com: [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com)

Fact Sheet #3

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