



# American Drug Testing

*Drug-Free Workplace Programs*

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## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE.

### Principal: Drug-testing students works

High school principal Chris Steffner says she's seen many efforts to keep teens from using drugs: education programs, "Just Say No" campaigns, scary speeches from people who were caught driving drunk.

"None of those things have any lasting impact," she says. "Peer pressure is so strong."

That's why, Steffner says,

she's a cheerleader for random drug testing of students. She tells other principals about the testing program she helped oversee for the past two years at Hackettstown High School, a 700-student campus in northern New Jersey.

During the program's first year, 10% of Hackettstown's

students were tested randomly from a pool of students who took part in after-school activities or who drove to school. One student tested positive, she says. Last year, 25% of the students were screened. No one tested positive.

The results show testing deters teen drug use, Steffner says: "It works in the workplace and it works in the military. Why wouldn't it work in a school?"

At a time when drug testing is expanding in schools, precisely how well it works in reducing drug use among middle and high school students is a much-debated topic. Surveys by the University of Michigan indicate that teens' use of most drugs is stable or down slightly this year. Analysts are trying to find out whether testing might lower the numbers further.

The number of schools screening students for street drugs such as cocaine and marijuana — and for performance enhancers such as steroids — has jumped

since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2002 that testing athletes and those involved in competitive extracurricular activities did not violate their privacy rights.

However, only about 2% of the nation's 28,000 middle

and high schools have testing policies. Meanwhile, drug education programs are everywhere, and many other factors — from teens' whims to the economy — have been cited as affecting drug use rates.

Little research has been done on testing's impact on student drug use because it's difficult and expensive to study, says Lloyd Johnston of the Monitoring the Future study at the University of Michigan, which surveys 50,000 students a year. And yet, concern about student drug use — including recent increases in the use of prescription drugs and steroids — has led hundreds of systems to embrace testing.

The Supreme Court said a school system's duty to provide a safe, drug-free environment outweighs students'

expectations of privacy. Now, Hackettstown and a few other systems — such as the one in Hagerstown, Ind. — are using the court's standard to justify

expanding random testing beyond students who are in sports or other competitive af-

ter-school activities. It's unclear whether such plans will draw new legal challenges.

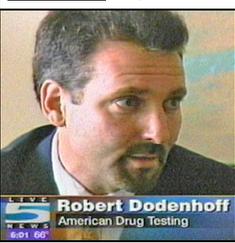
The Bush administration has been a key player in expanding student drug testing. The White House has asked Congress to boost federal grants for testing programs by 45% next year, to \$15 million. In 2005, a Ball State University survey found declines in drug use at 58% of 54 Indiana high schools that had testing.

Source: USA Today



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