

**THE STUDENT DRUG-TESTING COALITION**  
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PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE DRUG USE



**STUDENT DRUG-TESTING COALITION**  
Helping students pursue a better future.

Lisa Brady, former principal and now Superintendent of Hunterdon Central Regional High School (Flemington, NJ), is an active member of the Student Drug-Testing Coalition. In July 2003, Ms. Brady successfully led Hunterdon Central Regional High School to victory over a challenge to its student drug-testing program in the New Jersey Supreme Court (*Joye v. Hunterdon Central Bd. of Educ.* A-27-2002).

Commentary reprinted from the Student Assistance Journal, Summer 2003, Vol. 15, No. 3 with kind permission from Performance Resource Press, 1-800-453-7733, [www.prponline.net](http://www.prponline.net)

**Commentary**

**Drug Testing Is A Strong Weapon in the War on Drugs in Schools**

**By Lisa Brady**

Those of us charged with ensuring the safety and well being of students and staff must take seriously the threat imposed by students' illegal drug use. We can no longer simply say that the measures we have employed previously are enough. As a school district, we have exhausted all other options, including the use of drug sniffing dogs. We decided at that point to support random drug testing as another weapon in our battle to keep our kids away from drugs.

Random drug testing serves as an additional tool to help cut through the denial that often pervades families of teens involved with alcohol and drugs. This denial-cutting tool can be used by student assistance professionals who work with students and their families after a student has tested positive for drugs.

Nationally recognized organizations such as the Drug Free Schools Coalition identify the critical importance of strong student assistance programs as one of the first components necessary for the implementation of a successful student random drug testing program. It is simply irresponsible for schools to begin to identify students in need of counseling and referral services without having programs in place to provide interventions. The Hunterdon Central story embodies how a successful partnering of counseling services and drug testing can result in kids and communities making progress in the war on drugs.

Is drug testing the "be all and end all" in this ongoing battle? I think not. But to dismiss it based on concerns that drug tests can be adulterated or that it will discourage student participation in extracurricular activities is like throwing out the baby with the bath water. At Hunterdon Central, we have had no students elect to drop from activities since the re-implementation of our program. None.

This has mirrored our experience when we first implemented our program in 1997. Claims that drug testing reduces student participation in extracurricular activities are unfounded in any of the schools engaged in testing. These kinds of unfounded assumptions being promulgated by the American Civil Liberties Union and others have absolutely no basis in fact.

The challenge before school boards and communities is clear. We need to do a better job helping our teenagers say no to drugs. The Supreme Court has paved the way for stronger, stricter interventions. The dramatic success of our program at Hunterdon Central makes this challenge abundantly clear: Why do student random drug testing? You do it because it works.

- *Lisa Brady*