

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.

Hunterdon Central Regional High School
Impact of student random drug-testing program on drug use by students

Location: Flemington, New Jersey

Survey Periods: 1997, 1999, 2002

Type of testing: Random

Student groups tested: Athletes 1997–2000 school years, re-implemented December 2002; students participating in extra-curricular activities initially implemented February–August 2000 and re-implemented December 2002; students holding parking passes initially implemented December 2002.¹

Student groups surveyed:

1997–1999 (classes of 1996–1997, 1999–2000) grades 9–12, about 550 students representing approximately twenty-four (24%) percent of all students enrolled.

2002 (class of 2002–2003) grades 9–12, 948 students representing approximately thirty-six (36%) percent of all students enrolled.

Conclusions:

Hunterdon Central Regional High School experienced an overall *decrease* in student drug use over a three school-year period (1997–2000) during which time the only change to its substance abuse programs was the implementation of a random drug-testing program covering student athletes.

Hunterdon Central Regional High School experienced an overall *increase* in student drug use over a two school-year period (2000–2002) during the period that the random drug-testing program was suspended.

The highest percentage of students taking the surveys, representing all four grade levels, indicated negligible or no drug use consistently throughout the three survey periods demonstrating that a high percentage of Hunterdon high school students do not use drugs.

¹August 2000 the school was targeted for lawsuit by the ACLU. The random testing program was suspended until the school prevailed in the appellate court in July 2002 leading to re-implementation of the program in December 2002. The school continued the random drug testing program while the ACLU appeal to the New Jersey Supreme Court was under consideration. The NJ Supreme Court ruled in the school's favor July 9, 2003.

Survey process

In 1997, 1999 and 2002, the school surveyed a percentage of all students representing grades 9 through 12 on their drug use. The instrument used was the American Drug and Alcohol Survey created by the Rocky Mountain Behavioral Sciences Institute in Fort Collins, CO. School dropouts and absentees were not included in the 35-minute pencil and paper questionnaire. The anonymous questionnaire asked questions about student history of drug and alcohol use; frequency and intensity of current substance use; and questions to test if the student believed answers were anonymous. The survey had built-in controls to detect erroneous or exaggerated responses with approximately 40 different consistency checks (i.e. questions on 'fake' drugs and other checks to detect exaggerations). Students inconsistent three or more times, had their questionnaires removed before compilation of the results along with the questionnaires of those students considered to have exaggerated.

Summary of results

For the period 1997–1999, during which the student body was surveyed two times (1997 and 1999), the high school saw a *decline* in drug use from the 1997 pre-random student athlete drug testing program levels within the *entire* student population, not just the student group subject to random drug testing during the period as compared to the post-random drug testing program levels.

Overall, the high school experienced a decline in single-drug and multi-drug use, as well as a decline in the use of alcohol. Declines in the use of most drugs surveyed were clearly evident within the 9th, 10th, and 12th grade levels. However, there was an increase in the percentage of 12th grade students trying marijuana but indicating no current use. The decline in drug use amongst 11th grade students was to a lesser extent than the decline shown by the other three grade levels and in several categories there were increases for this grade level in: 1) patterns of drug use-light marijuana use; 2) ever tried a drug-use of narcotics other than heroin; 3) used a drug in the past month-PCP and alcohol.

For the period 2000–2002, during which the random drug testing of student athletes had been suspended pending outcome of litigation, results of the 2002 survey of students showed that drug use *increased* in the majority of categories surveyed, including the multi-drug use category which *increased* by more than 169 percent for all four grade levels combined over the 1999 surveyed levels. In some categories, drug use increased to levels higher than those found prior to implementation of the random drug testing program in 1997. The eleventh grade again stood out from the other three classes in that increases in multi-drug use (52%) were only about one-half or less of any of the other three classes reported increases (9th grade reported a 316 percent increase, 10th grade reported a 100 percent increase and 12th grade reported a 209 percent increase in multi-drug use).

Patterns of drug use

Survey data were grouped by patterns of drug use (high, moderate, low risk) for each grade level (grades 9–12) based upon survey responses for each drug listed and for frequency of use of each drug.

<u>9th grade students</u>	<u>1996-997²</u>	<u>1999-00³</u>	<u>2002-03⁴</u>
Multi-drug users ⁵	1.4%	0.6%	2.5%
Stimulant users ⁶	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Heavy marijuana users ⁷	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Light marijuana users ⁸	5.6%	2.4%	4.2%
Occasional drug users ⁹	14.7%	4.7%	5.4%
Heavy alcohol users ¹⁰	1.4%	0.6%	0.8%
Light alcohol users ¹¹	16.1%	12.4%	13.4%
Tried a drug, but no current use	10.5%	7.6%	7.1%
Negligible or No use	50.3%	71.7%	65.4%

<u>10th grade students</u>	<u>1996-97</u>	<u>1999-00</u>	<u>2002-03</u>
Multi-drug users ¹²	2.8%	0.0%	1.2%
Stimulant users ¹³	4.3%	0.9%	0.4%
Heavy marijuana users ¹⁴	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Light marijuana users	12.1%	9.5%	11.8%
Occasional drug users	7.1%	5.2%	4.5%
Heavy alcohol users	2.8%	5.2%	1.6%
Light alcohol users	16.3%	19.8%	13.4%
Tried a drug, but no current use	12.8%	12.1%	9.8%
Negligible or No use	41.8%	47.3%	57.3%

²Prior to implementation of random testing program for athletes.

³Period during which random testing program was conducted.

⁴Period during which random testing program was suspended.

⁵Multi-drug use is defined as daily use which is chronic and serious usually indicating drug dependence.

⁶Questions as to the use of methamphetamines were not included within the 'stimulants' category in the survey instrument until 1998.

⁷Heavy marijuana use is defined as use on weekdays and weekends, but not everyday use

⁸Light marijuana use is defined as use in the range of a few times a year

⁹Occasional use is defined as some use but rarely use any drug more than once a month

¹⁰Heavy alcohol use is defined as consuming alcohol every week **and** getting drunk frequently

¹¹Light alcohol use is defined as consuming some alcohol but rarely, if ever, getting drunk

¹²Multi-drug use is defined as daily use which is chronic and serious usually indicating drug dependence.

¹³Questions as to the use of methamphetamines were not included within the 'stimulants' category in the survey instrument prior to 1998.

¹⁴Heavy marijuana use is defined as use on weekdays and weekends, but not everyday use

<u>11th grade students</u>	<u>1996-97</u>	<u>1999-00</u>	<u>2002-03</u>
Multi-drug users	5.1%	4.4%	6.7%
Stimulant users	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%
Heavy marijuana users	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%
Light marijuana users	12.4%	13.2%	12.3%
Occasional drug users	4.4%	3.7%	5.2%
Heavy alcohol users	7.3%	5.1%	5.2%
Light alcohol users	16.1%	24.3%	20.6%
Tried a drug, but no current use	13.9%	11.0%	8.7%
Negligible or No use	40.1%	37.6%	39.7%

<u>12th grade students</u>	<u>1996-97</u>	<u>1999-00</u>	<u>2002-03</u>
Multi-drug users	6.6%	3.2%	9.9%
Stimulant users	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Heavy marijuana users	3.8%	2.1%	0.6%
Light marijuana users	14.2%	13.7%	15.5%
Occasional drug users	7.5%	3.2%	5.0%
Heavy alcohol users ¹⁵	5.7%	7.4%	3.9%
Light alcohol users ¹⁶	25.5%	24.2%	19.3%
Tried a drug, but no current use	4.7%	12.6%	16.0%
Negligible or No use	32.0%	33.6%	28.7%

¹⁵Heavy alcohol use is defined as consuming alcohol every week **and** getting drunk frequently

¹⁶Light alcohol use is defined as consuming some alcohol but rarely, if ever, getting drunk