



[www.PreventionNotPunishment.com](http://www.PreventionNotPunishment.com)

## **Checklist for Success: A Manual to Developing a RSDT Program**

A random student drug testing (RSDT) program can only be successful when:

- ✓ It is implemented as a tool for a preventative, not punitive, approach to drug abuse
- ✓ It is incorporated as a part of a larger comprehensive drug prevention program
- ✓ It adapts to a school's unique environment involving students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the local community.

This guide provides detailed information on the steps necessary to implement a successful student drug testing program.

Those steps are:

1. Identifying the Need
2. Presenting the Idea and Establishing Relationships
3. Writing Policies and Procedures
4. Starting and Evaluating the Program

### **Step 1: Identifying the Need**

A needs assessment is a process to collect and examine information about school-wide issues related to illegal drug use and then, using these data, to prioritize future goals, to develop a plan, and to allocate funds and resources.

#### **Developing a Needs Assessment**

The purpose of conducting a needs assessment is to portray an accurate view of illegal drug use within a school. Measuring the level of drug use will help you evaluate whether a student drug testing program is needed.

#### Utilize Local Resources

The following list provides some starting points for gathering information. These resources are most valuable because of their experience and insight into drug abuse trends within your community.

- ✓ School faculty and administration

- ✓ Local law enforcement agencies
- ✓ Local adolescent drug abuse treatment centers
- ✓ Juvenile services agency staff
- ✓ Health departments
- ✓ Businesses that employ teenagers
- ✓ Civic groups
- ✓ Faith community leaders
- ✓ Medical community (e.g. emergency room personnel)
- ✓ Local 12-step programs Alcohols Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous

### Research School Records

When identifying drug use in your school, it is important to gather information both quantitatively (measured by number) and qualitatively (observational data). Consider the following qualitative questions when assessing drug use within your school:

1. How widespread is illegal drug use at the school as assessed by administrators, teachers, students, parents and community?
2. How easily available are illegal drugs?
3. What are the most common types of drugs used?

Some relevant information may be collected through your school records and files. Collecting the following quantitative information will give you a better indication of the areas that illegal drug use may impact.

- ✓ Overall academic performance by grade (per year)
- ✓ Disciplinary actions (e.g. detentions, suspensions, academic probations)
- ✓ Violent incidents
- ✓ School grounds violations (e.g. destruction of school property or weapons present)
- ✓ Student absences, truancy and tardiness
- ✓ Drug- and alcohol-related occurrences
- ✓ Reports of students using illegal drugs and alcohol
- ✓ Police incidents involving students

### Collect State Survey Results

Obtaining additional data for quantitative analysis is possible by conducting or assessing surveys. You may accomplish this by participating in or accessing statewide surveys. Some benefits of using statewide surveys are:

- ✓ Historical Data – Your school may have participated in past statewide surveys
- ✓ Comparative Data – The surveys may provide information broken down by county or city

## Collect Nationwide Survey Results

If your school does not participate in any statewide survey, appropriate data can be extrapolated from nationwide surveys. The benefits of using nationwide surveys include:

- ✓ State-to-State Comparisons
- ✓ Historical Comparisons

Examples:

Monitoring the Future Survey: Provides national data regarding student drug use and behavior for 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

<http://www.MonitoringTheFuture.org>

National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Provides estimates for national and state data regarding substance abuse. Data is reported by age group and includes youths aged “12 or older”, “12 to 17”, and “adults 18-25”.

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm>

PRIDE Surveys: Provides national data for 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade regarding student perceptions and prevalence of illegal drug use through self-report surveys.

<http://www.pridesurveys.com>

## Use Pre-Existing Surveys as Models to Create Your Own

If you decide to create your own school assessment survey and plan to use questions from existing surveys, verify if you need permission from the original source. Consider using:

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) permits use of its questions for creating another survey. However, SAMHSA cautions that the data collected cannot be compared to estimates from the NSDUH because of differing survey methodology designs.

<http://oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda/methods.cfm>

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) reports national and state-specific data regarding drug use and behavior for youths aged 10 to 24. YRBS questionnaires may be copied, distributed, and adapted without permission.

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/questionnaire-txt.htm>

PRIDE Surveys will provide copies of a questionnaire, analyze results, and provide a full report for a fee determined by the number of questionnaires.

<http://www.pridesurveys.com>

When choosing which questions to use, there are certain core areas on which to focus:

1. Use of specific drugs in students’ lifetime, use in the past 12 months, and use in the past 30 days

2. Attitudes/perceptions about using drugs
3. Attitudes/perceptions about student drug testing

Be aware that there are certain federal guidelines that must be followed by public schools. Private schools may or may not be affected by these guidelines which include:

- ✓ Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/index.html>
- ✓ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)  
<http://www.ed.gov/print/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
- ✓ Office of Human Research protections (OHRP)  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp>
- ✓ Code of Federal Regulations 45 (CFR45)  
<http://www.nih.gov/icd/od/foia/cfr45.htm>

### **Analyzing and Reporting Results**

Once survey results and other data are collected and analyzed, your findings will help determine if your school has a significant illegal drug use problem and if a student drug testing program should be implemented.

If you decide that your school should implement a RSDT program, you will need to present a report to the pertinent decision-makers within your community. This may include but it's not limited to: the school board, superintendent, principal, and/or school director.

#### Presenting the Results of the Needs Assessment

Use your research to present a compelling argument. Your report should have the following sections:

✓	Items	Description
	Report	Use statistics from reports and surveys about student drug use
	Description	Describe what your school's current drug prevention program encompasses
	Benefits	List compelling reasons as to why your school should implement a student drug testing program
	Results	Show results from other student drug testing programs
	Timeline	Suggest a feasible timeline

#### Writing the Report

When reporting,

1. Educate others on the dangers of drug use and the effects it can have on your community.
2. Report results from local data.
3. Share survey results and compare it to state and/or national statistics that relate to your school district's particular situation.
4. Tailor your presentation to the audience to which you are presenting.

Writing the Description

Describe what your drug-free program already has in place and what it is lacking. For example:

<b>What We Want</b>	<b>Do We Have it?</b>
Student Assistance Professionals	Yes
Drug-Free Education in Curriculum	Somewhat, needs improvement
Student Drug Testing Policy	No policy
Strong Support for a Drug-Free School	Lukewarm policy

Do:

1. Describe the atmosphere of the current school environment as learned through conversations, notes and research. For example, there may be reports of students hospitalized because of incidents involving illegal drugs or alcohol served at parties.
2. Share opinions and encouragement from others concerned about drug use. Students, parents, or community members may have suggested additional or alternative activities within the community to combat youth drug use.

Do Not:

1. Single out individuals when describing situations. The source is not as important as the message.
2. Blame or threaten others. If they do not agree that anything should be done to improve the school's current drug-free program, ask if they can suggest a reasonable alternative solution.

Schools do not need unanimous support for a program, but it is desirable to hear and respond to everyone who expresses an opinion.

**Step 2: Presenting the Idea and Establishing Relationships**

**Presenting the Idea**

The planning process for implementing a RSDT program follows the accepted procedures for gaining approval from the appropriate school authority, superintendent, school board, principal, school director, etc. Usually you must receive such approval prior to presenting an idea to the school community. After receiving approval you are ready to share your findings and receive feedback.

## **Establishing Relationships**

When your plan for a RSDT program is approved, the next step is to disseminate knowledge about student drug testing to the community. Use your research data and presentation materials to educate community members about the benefits of RSDT as well as the demonstrated need you have identified in your school community.

Share all of your results and findings and encourage feedback from others so that all concerns are heard before a RSDT policy is created. Meet with small groups and relevant individuals. Ask about their concerns and opinions. Ask for their support.

Do not expect everyone to be supportive of the idea. Be respectful of those who disagree. Respond to their concerns and suggest solutions to any problems they express. It is often helpful to include the local medical and legal organizations and local media outlets in this community outreach process.

### Extend Your Network of Contacts

The following examples show how these relationships may help build support for your student drug testing program:

<b>Contacts</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
School Officials	Contacts within or outside your school county that have already implemented a RSDT program can provide valuable insight and support of your program.
Community Coalitions & Local Businesses	Provide resources such as incentives or monetary donations to your program.
Law Enforcement Officials	Add credibility in meetings and gatherings about the consequences for students with substance abuse problems.
Legal Counsels	Provide legal support and answer any questions pertaining to confidentiality and privacy issues that may surface during meetings.
Students	With their unique everyday experiences, students can provide fresh perspectives that others may not have considered when developing policies and procedures.

Schools that have conducted informational sessions find it much easier to target small groups rather than large ones. One approach to conducting meetings is to hold them with subjectively-defined groupings of parents. For example, a meeting may include only parents of students participating in a certain athletic sport or other extracurricular activity.

Most parents will know other parents with children that have similar interests and may feel more comfortable voicing their opinion in a familiar environment. During these meetings, participants should be encouraged to express their specific concerns about drug use in the community as well as their recommended solutions.

### Select a Task Force

The purpose of a task force is to create a permanent support system for implementing the RSDT program. The task force should comprise a variety of representatives from the school environment as well as the surrounding community. These representatives are “key stakeholders” and you will likely recognize them as leaders of a particular group or organization. They should be in a position to disseminate information to interested parties and to the general public.

The task force will be responsible for developing the policy and procedures of your school’s RSDT. Some of these key stakeholders may include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Student Assistance Professionals
- ✓ Athletic Coaches
- ✓ Extracurricular Activity Teachers
- ✓ Board of Education Members
- ✓ Superintendent
- ✓ School Medical Personnel
- ✓ School Public Relations Staff
- ✓ Local Health Care Agency Employees
- ✓ Local Businesspeople
- ✓ Law Enforcement Officials
- ✓ Legal Counsel
- ✓ Community Coalition Leaders

Building these relationships will help you maintain a strong, successful program. Invite high-profile representatives in your community to be part of the process. These individuals are natural motivators for the community.

Representatives from a variety of backgrounds should be invited to join the task force. It is recommended to have only a couple (1 or 2) representatives from each group so that the task force will not be too large. You may find it helpful to form subcommittees within large task forces.

### Prepare Task Force for Step 3

Once you have received approval and support for your school’s RSDT program, your task force can turn its attention to the details of how the program will function through creating the policies and procedures that fit your school’s culture, existing drug prevention programs, and your community’s environment.

### Step 3: Writing Policies and Procedures

When writing a RSDT program policy and its procedures, it is essential to consider how it will be incorporated into a school's existing comprehensive drug prevention program. For public schools a random, mandatory, non-punitive drug testing program for athletes and those in extracurricular activities is recommended. A voluntary component can be added for all other students. Private schools can usually test all students.

A non-punitive program does not punish students or notify law enforcement authorities of positive test results. A non-punitive program may include consequences such as suspension from a particular sport or activity for a given amount off time or until a student tests negative. It can include appropriate referral to counseling or treatment. It should not hinder a student's academic performance or academic school record.

Some schools chose to use punitive consequences for for-cause drug tests conducted when there is reason to believe a particular student has recently used an illegal drug. This is a very different situation from a positive drug test resulting from a random test where prior to the test there was no individualized suspicion that the student had used drugs. In random testing the standard is not to impose punishments, including suspension or notification of law enforcement officials.

#### Policies

Four sections are suggested to be included in a RSDT policy:

✓	Section	Description
	Statement of Need	Explains why a program should be implemented.
	Introduction	Describes the purpose and scope of the proposed RSDT program.
	Discussion of Procedures	Describes all of the procedures, confidentiality measures and consequences of the program.
	Rights & Responsibilities	Explains the mutual obligations of the school to parents and students and their corresponding responsibilities to the school.

#### Statement of Need

A statement of need justifies the policy's creation. Findings from the school's needs assessment can provide supporting information to substantiate this section. The statement of need also reviews the impact of drug abuse on the health and safety of students, even when they do not use drugs themselves, and the school's commitment to its community.



## Introduction

This section explains the purpose and intent of setting up a RSDT program and includes a general overview of the scope of the proposed program, whether the program is mandatory, voluntary, or a combination of both. It also indicates which students will be eligible for the program and the number, frequency and types of tests that will be conducted. A description of these elements can be found below:

*Voluntary Program:* Permits students, usually with parental permission, to choose to participate in the drug testing program or to “opt out” of the program. Lack of participation does not affect their inclusion in any school-related activity.

*Mandatory Program:* Students who participate in specific activities or sports are included in the drug testing program. If they refuse, they are not permitted to participate in the activity.

A combination of mandatory and voluntary programs is often used. For example, sports teams may have mandatory drug testing and the rest of the student body may volunteer to be a part of the drug testing program.

*Category of Students Tested:* The school may decide to test one or more of the following categories:

- ✓ Athletic groups
- ✓ Students participating in extracurricular activities
- ✓ Student drivers
- ✓ Entire student body
- ✓ Students who volunteer for the program

The most common categories of students tested are those participating on athletic teams and in extracurricular organizations, as the U.S. Supreme Court has reviewed challenges to testing for these groups of students. Often student drivers are included in the testing pool. Most student drug testing programs currently do not test the entire student body due to insufficient legal precedence for doing so in public schools; however, schools may add a voluntary component to their programs for students to opt-in to the program. Parents and students often will select this option for its value as a deterrent: it gives students another good reason not to use drugs.

### *Number of Tests and Frequency of Testing*

The total number of tests a school conducts each school year will depend on how often students are tested and how many students are tested throughout the academic year. Some schools currently use a testing frequency of about 20 percent (20%) of the eligible student body. Fifty percent (50%) is the recommended testing frequency. The annual testing rate is determined by dividing the number of annual tests by the total number of students that are eligible to be tested.

Sample Calculation:

$$\frac{500 \text{ tests per year}}{1,000 \text{ eligible students}} = 0.50 \quad \text{Or,} \quad 50\% \text{ annual testing rate}$$

Schools generally test once a week or once a month usually testing groups of 10 or more randomly selected students on that day.

Commonly, schools randomize testing days in order to maintain unpredictability of testing times. The policy may indicate that the school will randomly test, on average, once a week but it should not be specific about the day of the week. If students do not know precisely when they will be tested, the program's ability to serve as a deterrent to drug use is enhanced. Random testing means that even if a test was conducted yesterday, the students are still subject to testing today. For this to be true, a school needs a system for random selection of dates; otherwise, if the school conducts a test yesterday, students know that there will be no tests again for a week or a month depending on the pattern established at the school. The point of random testing is that every school day, any student in the testing pool could be tested.

#### *What Drugs to Test?*

The types of drugs for which a school tests will be determined partly by information gathered about drug use in the school, and partly from an assessment of what drugs are most often used in the local community. The most commonly tested group of drugs are the 5-panel drugs used in workplace drug testing: amphetamine-methamphetamine (powerful stimulants), marijuana (a psychoactive depressant known to hamper learning), cocaine (an addictive, powerful stimulant), opiates (strong pain relievers with sedative effects and high rates of addiction), and PCP (a hallucinogen, often associated with distorted body image and violent behavior). Other drugs such as alcohol, Ecstasy, LSD, nicotine, and steroids are tested for less frequently.

#### *What Kind of Test?*

The decision about the kind of test the school will use will depend on a number of factors including cost, drugs to be tested, on site vs. off-site collection and determination of results, and the type of test itself: urine, saliva, hair, or sweat. Urine, hair, and saliva are the most common options, with urine being the most prevalent. One or a combination of these options may be selected and schools may decide to alternate between the types of specimens collected. Some advantages and disadvantages of each test are listed below:

<b>Specimen</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Urine	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Tests for alcohol and nicotine as well as other drugs</p> <p>Many sources of tests</p>	<p>Cheating a potential problem</p> <p>Limited window of detection (1 to 3 days usually)</p> <p>Test sometimes considered to be embarrassing or invasive</p> <p>Hazardous to ship</p>	About \$6-10
Hair	<p>Longer window of detection (up to 3 months)</p> <p>Does not deteriorate</p> <p>Can measure chronic users</p> <p>Collection is easy</p> <p>Difficult to cheat</p> <p>Detects alcohol/cocaine combination use</p>	<p>More expensive</p> <p>Test usually limited to basic 5-drug panel</p> <p>Cannot detect alcohol alone</p> <p>Will only detect frequent marijuana use in the prior 90 days, not occasional use</p>	About \$30-45
Saliva	<p>Inexpensive</p> <p>Sample obtained under direct supervision</p> <p>Samples can be collected easily</p> <p>Can detect very recent alcohol use</p> <p>Reflects recent drug use (24 hours)</p>	<p>Will not detect past drug use</p> <p>Many under-report marijuana use</p>	About \$6-10
Sweat Patch	<p>Non-invasive</p> <p>Variable removal date (1-21 days)</p> <p>Tamper-proof</p> <p>Quick application and removal</p> <p>Longer window of detection</p>	<p>Limited number of labs available</p> <p>People with skin eruptions or cuts cannot wear patch</p> <p>Not recommended for schools</p> <p>Passive exposure to drugs may contaminate patch</p>	Expensive

Confirmation of screened positive drug tests is conducted at a laboratory using Gas Chromatography (GC)/Mass Spectrometry (MS) and costs approximately \$40. This is a manageable budgetary item because there are relatively few positives -- most schools report a 3-5% positive testing rate.

Cut-off levels, or the minimum concentration level of drugs in a sample, are built-in to standardize test results. These levels are different depending upon the type of specimen collection: urine, hair, saliva, or sweat patch and are established by the laboratories or kit

manufacturers. Drug test results are reported as positive or negative at or above the stated cut off levels, unlike alcohol tests which are commonly reported at various levels.

## **Procedures**

Written procedures should cover the following:

- ✓ Random selection process
- ✓ General testing procedures based on type of drug test used and method of collection (on-site or use of Third Party Administrators)
- ✓ Laboratory testing and confirmation of positive tests
- ✓ What to do with a positive test
- ✓ Chain-of-custody procedures
- ✓ Management procedures for positive tests
- ✓ Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs)

### *Random Selection Process*

Students participating in the student drug testing program are selected by their student identification number or another assigned number and never by name. A list matching the students' numbers to their names is kept in a secure location accessible only to a limited number of designated school personnel. When the ID numbers are selected, the students' names are accessed and matched with the students' class schedules. The students will be asked to report for the test just in time to be tested. Advance notice should not be given.

Selection can be done using:

- ✓ Computer – A computer algorithm selects student ID numbers
- ✓ Manually – ID numbers are selected by hand (similar to picking a raffle ticket winner)
- ✓ Laboratory – The laboratory that provides the randomly selected ID Numbers (not all labs provide this service)

### *General Testing Procedures*

Students are randomly chosen to be drug tested. They are escorted to a private place where each individual student drug test is conducted. Students should not be allowed to leave the escort at any time prior to the test administration once they are aware that they are to be tested to reduce the risk of cheating on the tests. School or contract laboratory personnel oversee the testing. Procedures will differ depending on the type of test that is being done. The descriptions below fit many testing situations but it is important to understand the procedures related to each of the specific tests used by the school since they vary with different laboratories and manufacturers.

### *Urine Tests*

A secure bathroom is designated for urine tests. The tests do not need to be observed directly. A test cup is given to the student who returns the sample to the test administrator. The chain-of-custody procedures begin with the student sealing the cup and signing the seal. The student is then free to depart from the testing site. Once all of the day's samples are collected, the designated administrator may either conduct the initial screening test or send the samples to the lab for screening. The screening test is a simple immunoassay test that determines if the sample is negative or positive. Negative tests are disposed of either at the school or at the lab. Positive tests are retained for CG/MS confirmation (see below). Under no circumstances should a student be informed at the time of the test of the test results. Depending on the school policy, notification of negative test results may or may not be provided to parents. Certain precautions should be taken to deter tampering with or diluting urine specimens. Schools should use one designated bathroom and take measures such as shutting off water faucets and adding blue dye to the toilets.

### *Hair Tests*

Hairs are cut near the scalp with the amount about the thickness of a shoelace tip. Only the one and one half inch closest to the scalp is tested but the entire length of hair is usually submitted to the laboratory. Each one half inch of hair represents one month of growth and the drug use during that period of time. If scalp hair length is insufficient, hair from other areas of the body can be used. The amount of hair taken is usually not visibly noticeable. The sample is sent to a laboratory for testing. Positives are confirmed by GC/MS.

### *Saliva Tests*

The test kit includes a swab or piece of absorbent material which is placed in the donor's mouth for about one minute and is then removed and placed in a collection container. For on-site testing, the absorbent material is then squeezed mechanically and the liquid is forced into a chamber where it is exposed to specific drug-detection antibodies. If the sample is read as positive, it is sent to the laboratory for confirmation.

### *Sweat Patch Tests*

Sweat patch testing is seldom used in school settings, with one exception. It can be a useful way to monitor students who have tested positive previously and who have completed a drug treatment program because it is worn for about a week. During that time, it is collecting evidence of any drug use. Treatment programs normally continue to drug test as part of the after-care program, so this type of test is rarely used by schools. The patch is removed at the school and sent to a laboratory for analysis.

### *Laboratory Testing & Confirmation of Positive Tests*

It is strongly recommended that schools contract with a SAMHSA, CLIA, or state-agency approved laboratory. These laboratories must meet minimum requirements and are likely to provide accurate, reliable testing results.

[http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov/DrugTesting/Level\\_1\\_Pages/CertifiedLabs.aspx](http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov/DrugTesting/Level_1_Pages/CertifiedLabs.aspx)  
<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/clia/oscar.aspx>

Laboratories will use different methods when analyzing samples. The usual method is to use an immunoassay test as an initial screening test, and to confirm positive results with a gas chromatography/mass spectrometry test. If the screening test was conducted at the school and confirmation of a positive is requested, the screening test will be omitted at the laboratory. This two step test insures the accuracy of the result.

<b>Laboratory Test</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Immunoassay	Used as a preliminary screening test. Changes color if specific drug is detected. Similar to a “litmus test.” Least expensive. Tests for a class of drugs (e.g. opiates) but cannot separate specific drugs within the class.
Gas Chromatography (GC)/Mass Spectrometry (MS) Combination	Used as a confirmation tests. Highly accurate. This is the equivalent to identifying the chemical fingerprint of the drug. Expensive.

#### *What to do with a Positive Test?*

If the GC/MS test is reported as positive, it does not indicate that a student has used illegal drugs unless the test is verified by a certified medical review officer (MRO). The results are submitted to the MRO to verify that the positive result is not due to appropriate prescription medicine use or some other confounding fact such as recent anesthesia. The student will be contacted by the MRO to discuss the student’s use of prescription medicines. If this is claimed it will be verified by the MRO by contacts with the student’s parents, physician or pharmacy. The parent may become involved at this point to assist with the clarification of the results. If it appears that a prescription or procedure has resulted in a laboratory positive result, the MRO will confirm this. The test then will be reported to the school as a negative and the sample will be discarded. If the confirmation results in a positive test result, the sample is retained at the laboratory and the result is reported as a verified positive to the designated school administrator for appropriate action.

MRO review, coupled with the two-step test and careful chain-of-custody, ensures that reports of verified positive tests are legally valid.

### *Chain-of-Custody Procedures*

Chain-of-custody means that documentation can be provided showing that the specimen was properly collected, transmitted and tested. Generally, when a sample is collected, the student seals the sample, signs it and turns it over to the collector who must sign to ensure confidentiality. The collector is entrusted with the samples and may conduct the initial screening test. If the result is negative, the sample is discarded. The result is logged by the collector.

Samples to be screened or positives requiring confirmation are sent to the laboratory using a system that tracks it with location and signature at each stage. Samples that have been verified as positives by the MRO are retained by the laboratory in the cup in which they were submitted in a secure location to be available in the case of any further legal action. If a test is negative, it is documented as such and discarded.

### *Management Procedures for Positive Tests*

The manner in which positive tests are handled is very important. In order to protect the student, school and parent, confidentiality matters must be taken seriously. It is important to make sure that all parties involved understand how the testing will be done, and what to do when something does not go according to plan. School administrators should anticipate problems that may occur and plan what to do if such things should happen. These procedures should be detailed in the policy and approved by the school board. There should also be a specific procedure to follow if a student and/or his or her parent/guardian believe that a drug test has been reported incorrectly as a confirmed positive.

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) suggests that when a positive test result has been reviewed and confirmed for illegal drug use, the next step is to involve the parents. Parents need to know that anger, accusations and harsh punishment could make the situation worse. Instead, it is important to treat the student with respectful compassion and work as a team to change his or her behavior and to help the student become and stay drug-free. Many schools require students who test positive to enroll in a drug education course or activity. Some also offer Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) with trained counselors who are linked to resources in the greater community. Schools should also conduct frequent random follow-up drug tests on students for many months after the initial positive test for students who have tested positive to make sure that they remain drug free. The testing frequency for these follow-up tests should be once or more each month.

### *Student Assistance Programs (SAPs)*

The role of SAPs needs to be addressed in the policy. Their role is important to the overall comprehensive prevention program. SAPs can counsel students and parents and refer students for treatment. They can be resources for students and parents in the event of a confirmed positive drug test. SAPs can continually evaluate and monitor the student

drug testing program to help make sure that it operates properly. (To find out more about SAPs, visit <http://www.nasap.org>)

## **Rights & Responsibilities**

Student rights and school responsibilities to students must be addressed; these will vary depending on whether schools are private or public. Private schools may have stricter policies regarding zero-tolerance because they are not subject to the same laws as public schools. Public schools may have a graded “step-wise” program with escalating consequences for students who test positive more than once.

### *Confidentiality*

Procedures for drug testing that protect confidentiality must be described explicitly in the school’s RSDT policy. It is recommended that a school attorney review the confidentiality requirements section of the policy carefully to make sure that it is consistent with local, state and federal laws covering student confidentiality.

It is the school’s obligation to protect students and obtain proper parental consent in accordance with all applicable laws. By establishing appropriate, informed consent and information management procedures before testing occurs the school ensures the confidentiality of its students and of drug test results.

Public schools who receive federal funding are responsible for maintaining compliance with federal laws such as FERPA and PPRA.

### *Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)*

FERPA addresses the confidentiality of student records to ensure that each local educational agency receiving Department of Education funds may not have a policy or practice of denying parents the right to:

- ✓ Inspect and review educational records;
- ✓ Seek to amend educational records; and
- ✓ Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records except as specified by law

Schools receiving federal funding for their RSDT programs must annually notify parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>



### *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)*

This amendment governs pupil rights in the realm of federally funded school surveys, analyses and/or evaluations. Schools must obtain written parental consent from participating minors when inquiring about one or more of the following areas:

- ✓ Political affiliations of the student or parent/guardian;
- ✓ Mental or psychological history of the student or family;
- ✓ Student's sexual behavior or attitudes;
- ✓ Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior by the student;
- ✓ Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom a student has close family relationships;
- ✓ Student's legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships such as those with lawyers, physicians and ministers;
- ✓ Religious practices, affiliation or beliefs of the student or parent/guardian; and
- ✓ Student's family income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility of participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such a program)

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/index.html>

Schools not funded in this activity by the federal government are usually not subject to PRRA, but as with other aspects of RSDT policy it is wise to consult a school attorney to insure compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and policies.

### **Step 4: Implement and Evaluate a Random Student Drug Testing Program**

#### **Prepare the School Community**

It is important to make sure that the school community is aware of the upcoming RSDT program prior to its implementation. Distribute information about the RSDT program soon after the task force's policies and procedures are approved and create as many opportunities as possible for parents/guardians, educators and community leaders to become aware of, and educated about, the program. The number one reason to do the drug testing is to discourage student drug use. The more the school community discusses the RSDT program the more deterrence the program creates.

Meetings should be held with parents, coaches, extracurricular activity teachers, administrative staff, and others involved in the student drug testing process so that questions and concerns can be raised and answered. The objective is to provide a comfortable small affinity group of parents and school administrators to discuss any concerns about the RSDT program of particular relevance to that group of parents.

Near the program's start date, distribute packets containing a copy of the RSDT policy, consent forms and fact sheets about RSDT with other required forms before the school year so that all interested parties will be familiar with the rationale for the testing.

### *Reminder to Administrative Staff*

Consent forms will need to be signed and returned *prior* to the start date for the testing.

### **Evaluate the Program**

After the RSDT program has been implemented, its evaluation allows administrators and budget analysts to determine if the program needs to be changed. It is important to remember that the primary goal of a RSDT program is as a deterrent to drug use by students. In addition to quantifying testing results and costs, the initial needs assessment surveys should be compared with post-program implementation.

When evaluating a program, it is helpful to keep in mind the following measures:

- ✓ Cost – Cost of the tests, of administering the tests and of managing the program
- ✓ Time – How much time the staff devotes to the program
- ✓ Records – What records and files must be kept, for instance:
  - How many drug tests are performed each year?
  - How many students are tested?
  - How many positive tests occurred?
  - What were the outcomes of positive tests?
  - What drugs were prevalent?
  - How many students who tested positive succeeded in becoming and staying drug-free?
- ✓ Feedback – Gather feedback on the RSDT program by asking:
  - Do the students feel that the program has made a positive change in the school? Administering the needs assessment survey again to students will measure self-reported changes in drug use as well as attitudinal changes of the students.
  - Does the school faculty and administration perceive a change in the behavior and academic success of the student body?
  - Do families consider the RSDT program to be helpful?

These assessments should be performed annually. A report should be generated highlighting the results of the last year and a comparison made to past years. Include suggestions for improvements. If the reporting process becomes burdensome, it may be possible to enlist support from a local university.

Make the annual report public as a means to educate and keep the community aware of the ongoing student drug testing program and share the findings with all key stakeholders in the community.

## **Complete Steps to Success: A Guide to Developing a RSDT Program**

By the time you have completed these steps you will have implemented a successful RSDT program. Please visit our online resources for further information regarding student drug testing. If you have any questions, contact us via email at [contactus@ibhinc.org](mailto:contactus@ibhinc.org) or visit our RSDT website [www.PreventionNotPunishment.org](http://www.PreventionNotPunishment.org).

