
The Purpose Of Drug Testing In A High School

Drug testing involves the use of chemical analysis to determine whether or not a person has taken a certain drug or drugs. It is very possible to test for the use of just one type of drug, but most of the time many drugs are usually tested at the same time using one single sample. There are several testing methods that are available that use urine, hair, oral fluids, and sweat. These methods vary in cost, reliability, drugs detected, and detection period ("DOC: Drug"). A drug test looks for the presence of one or more illegal or prescription drugs in your urine, blood, saliva, hair, or sweat. Urine is the most common type of method used for drug testing. Drug testing can be performed in many ways due there being several testing methods.

Drug testing may be used for, employment, legal or forensic purposes, and sports organizations. Following the models that have been established in the workplace, some schools have administered drug testing. Drug testing in schools is a fairly new issue for the law system. Introduced during the late 1980s and developing over time, the practice of testing student for the use of illegal drugs is slowly becoming a growing percentage of schools nationwide ("Drug Testing"). Students in many schools are affected by drugs, and because of this more districts have showed their interest in performing drug testing. Schools have started to adopt the use of student drug testing to decrease drug abuse and the use of illegal drugs amongst the students. The hope with giving drug tests is to serve as a way to discourage students from doing drugs and for students to not give into peer pressure to take drugs. Also drug testing can identify the students who have used illegal drugs, as well as identify those who already have a drug problem and can then provide them with a referral to treatment.

It is a privilege to play a sport and be a part of a team; drugs should not be an issue. Drug testing should be used in schools to test student athletes of drug use. When a student joins a team they are agreeing to commit to everything about that team along with the school expectations and guidelines. Student athletes are expected to play up to their full potential without the use of drugs. If a school wants to give out drug tests then they should be aloud to. It is their job to keep student athletes drug free. If athletes know they are going to be tested, then the use of drugs will most likely decrease. In many high schools there is a code of conduct that prohibits the use of drugs because it is against the rules and will result in consequences that will most likely have students suspended from sports. Students are aware of the rules and school policies, so they are taking it upon themselves and doing it at their own risk because they know the consequences. When school districts offer sports at their schools it is a privilege for the students to be able to play and participate in those sports at their school. There are schools that don't have sports or even offer them, so for the schools that do it would be unfair if the schools who have sports have athletes that make poor decisions that may result in there sports season from ending. This is wrong because those students that are not able to participate in sports get the opportunity to play most likely wouldn't do anything that would affect them from not being able to play, but the students that do have sports at their schools often don't have the mindset of what the outcomes could be if they take any action in doing illegal drugs.

The special interest group Americans for Safe Access goes against the idea of drug testing being performed on high school athletes. This is because the mission of Americans for Safe Access is to ensure safe and legal access to marijuana for therapeutic uses and research

("Americans for Safe"). Drug testing is used to prevent high school students from having obtaining access to illegal drugs. This would be opposing and going against having student athletes drug testing in schools.

A common argument for those against drug testing is that simple fact that it would be an invasion of privacy. However the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that, "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" ("Fourth Amendment"). The Fourth Amendment only protects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Drug testing for high school athletes should be required because it decreases drug use in schools. By having drug testing in schools the risk for students becoming addicted to drugs will be lowered. The risk for drugs within a school is going to decrease when there is drug testing for athletes because most but not all drug problems in schools come from sports. There are many people who believe drug testing is harmful and infringes on students' rights. This can be proved when the article, Random Drug Testing Is Harmful and Infringes on Students' Rights it states, "In a desire to eliminate the possibility for false positives, schools often ask students to identify their prescription medications before taking a drug test. This both compromises students' privacy rights and creates an added burden for schools to ensure that students' private information is safely guarded" (Appel). The idea of this example is that innocent students will be getting punished and their rights will be invaded, violating the privacy rights of the students. Lastly, another example why many believe student drug testing is an invasion of privacy is when the article, Preface to 'Should Teens Have Privacy Rights Respected at School?' it states, "In the event of positive test results, schools often ask students to provide lists of prescription and over-the-counter medications they are taking in order to ascertain whether or not those drugs may have produced a false positive. This means that students taking birth control or antidepressants may be forced to disclose this information to school officials" ('Preface to 'Should'). The message from this is that using student drug testing in schools is an invasion of privacy and can result in students not having any control over hiding personal information, due to the schools being able to know all about there medical background and personal legal prescribed drugs because with the drug tests they are unable to hide that information. These were issues that were addressed by those with opposing viewpoints that do not support the use of drug testing students in schools because they feel it is an invasion of privacy.

The purpose of drug testing high school athletes is to not punish students who use illegal drugs but to prevent future drug use and to help those students who are already using illegal drugs to become drug free. If a student does test positive for drugs, the school can keep performing follow up testing to make sure they don't continue using drugs. For students who have developed drug addiction, the school can give them a referral to drug testing that will be effective to them to begin the recovery process ("Random Student"). The use of drug testing student athletes is not an invasion of privacy because the students are putting themselves at risk by making the choice of using illegal drugs, so in all fairness if the school has any reason for suspicion than they should have every right to take action and get involved.

The use of drugs many times leads to drug abuse. High school students are more likely to become addicted to drugs is because the brain of a teenager still is not fully developed and growing, making it easier for teenagers to develop drug addiction. Due to many teenagers being very impulsive to seek satisfaction and to not think about the consequences of their actions,

they are for the most part at a higher risk when it comes to the use of drugs. Because the teenage brain is still developing the ability to go back to normal after using drugs may be more difficult than those who are older and have fully developed brains, due to how much damage drugs affect the brain. This can be proved when the article, Drug Use and Abuse it said, "Other products besides drugs are abused. Increasing numbers of young people inhale or sniff common household chemical products, such as glue, paint, and lighter fluid, to produce a high. Inhalants have dangerous side effects, including damage to the nervous system, brain, liver, and kidneys" ('Drug Use and Abuse'). This supports the issue of drug abuse, if students were drug tested in schools then they would be able to get the help they need before it is too late and can very likely lead to a lifelong addiction.

Even though drug testing is allowed by the Supreme Court many schools still do not have drug testing policies. Drug testing for high school athletes should be required because it decreases drug use in schools, is relatively inexpensive, and can prevent drug abuse that could lead to addiction. An example of an issue with drug testing was the Vernonia School District v. Acton case. In this case the Vernonia School District, requires any student who wants to participate in activities such as athletics, they need to give consent to allow for drug testing throughout the sports season. The student athletes take one test at the beginning of the season and then drug tests are given at random throughout the sports season. In the 1995 Supreme Court case, Vernonia School District v. Acton, the decision determined that random, suspicionless drug testing of students participating in athletics was permissible. The main idea of this court case was that a 12 year old named James Acton, who was a seventh grader at Washington Grade School in Vernonia, Oregon, wanted to try out for the football team. The school required all student athletes to take drug tests at the beginning of the season and on a random basis during the school year. The parents of James refused to let him be drug tested because, they believed that there was no evidence that he used drugs or alcohol. The school suspended James from sports for the season. He and his parents sued the school district, arguing that mandatory drug testing without suspicion of illegal activity constituted an unreasonable search under the Fourth Amendment. However they did not win the case this was because the school was able to prove to the court that there was a growing drug problem in their district and that the athletes were a big part of that problem. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the school district. In the article, Vernonia School District 47J v. Acton it states, "the Court ruled that random drug testing did not violate the constitutionally guaranteed privacy of participants in interscholastic sports programs" ("Vernonia School"). This means that students must follow school rules and submit to school discipline. But student athletes have fewer privacy rights because they must follow rules that don't apply to students who do not participate in school sports.

A plan for addressing the issue to solve the problem is to have regular scheduled and random drug testing. A solution is better than alternatives because alternatives just open the issues up to more problems but finding a solution will be the best long term outcome. The purpose of drug testing high school athletes is to not punish students who use illegal drugs but to prevent future drug use and to help those students who are already using illegal drugs to become drug free. If a student does test positive for drugs, the school can keep performing follow up testing to make sure they don't continue using drugs. For students who have developed drug addiction, the school can give them a referral to drug testing that will be effective to them to begin the recovery process.

There were many justices and lawyers that were apart of the Vernonia School District v. Acton case. In the article, Vernonia School District 47J v. Acton it states, "justice Scalia, writing for the

majority, was careful to point out that the legal status of students, and the equally unique social status and voluntary forfeiture of privacy accepted by student athletes, made this case unique and of limited use as a legal precedent” (“Vernonia School”). Antonin Scalia is a justice for the court who wrote the majority opinion in this case. In the article Public school drug testing: the impact of Acton it says the following about Antonin Scalia, “Justice Scalia concluded that prevention of drug use among children was as important as the efficient administration of the drug laws...Justice Scalia described four separate factors relating to drugs and their effect on children” (Rosenberg). There are many public officials who have many opinions and viewpoints of the issue of drug testing in general as well as drug testing in schools performed on student athletes. Many justices have taken part in Supreme Court cases that have had to deal with the use drug testing to be performed routinely on high school students.

Drug testing students gives them a reason to say no when asked to use illegal drugs. Performing a drug testing routinely on high school athletes only applies to students who are participating on the school sport teams. If schools follow basic drug testing action plans, students will provide the sample in a private area with an uncompromising plan of action. Drug testing is a standard plan of action that most but not all people will experience at some point in their lives, most likely when applying for a job. High school student athletes who want to continue in sports and compete at the college level and or also become a professional athlete should get used to the purpose of drug testing.

Performing drug testing on high school student athletes has many benefits. The use of drug testing high school athletes should be adopted and implemented throughout the nation to help prevent drug use to limit students becoming addicted and effected by illegal drugs later on in life. Also the use of drug testing will limit students from being peer pressured into taking illegal drugs and promoting more awareness. When a school district wants to perform drug test on students they can decide what type of methods they would use that would best fit for the school. Substance abuse prevention can and should be viewed as a common concern of employers, employees and students. Most people do not engage in illicit drug use or want to deal with the complications of working or studying with drug abusers. When misunderstandings about the testing process are clarified, drug testing has been proven a deterrent to illegal drug use and a way for workplaces and schools to be proactive in substance abuse prevention. Also some advantages of drug testing in schools is that it will over time give the school more protection and kept safe when drug use is decreasing. This will help lead the schools in become more free of drugs, which the schools can then put into action as becoming a drug-free school. These were just some of the many benefits of performing drug test on high school student athletes. There are many reasons for why drug testing needs to be performed on high school athletes.