

Alcohol testing increases in high schools

JOHN HENRY
NEWS WRITER

A New Jersey school district is following in H-F's footsteps after deciding to randomly drug test its students for alcohol consumption. The school district's policy has now created a debate as to whether or not it is acceptable to monitor students off campus grounds.

Pequannock Township School District in Pequannock, New Jersey, already had a drug testing policy prior to testing for alcohol consumption, like H-F. However, Pequannock School District administrators decided to alter their district's drug testing policy after seeing the annual number of alcohol related deaths among teens rival the number of US soldiers killed in the War in Iraq.

H-F was the first school in Illinois to begin testing for drugs and alcohol in 1989.

Athletic Director Joe Skowronski, who is in charge of drug testing at H-F, said that drug testing is rarely done at other schools due to the expense.

"[Drug testing] does cost. Each drug test is relatively expensive. We don't test for steroids because that test is very expensive but we do test for alcohol and ten different drugs," Skowronski said.

Unlike H-F, Pequannock tests students who drive to school as well as students who participate in sports and activities. Pequannock's test can

So far, the tests have been well received by Pequannock School District administrators, but social activist groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) feel differently about Pequannock's drug testing policy. Deborah Jacobs, Executive Director of ACLU of New Jersey, told the *Associated Press* she felt that testing

Junior Elise Brown has been drug tested before. She feels that the process is good, in theory, but does not work effectively.

"It seems like some people never get caught or called down at all, so it never really affects anything," Brown said.

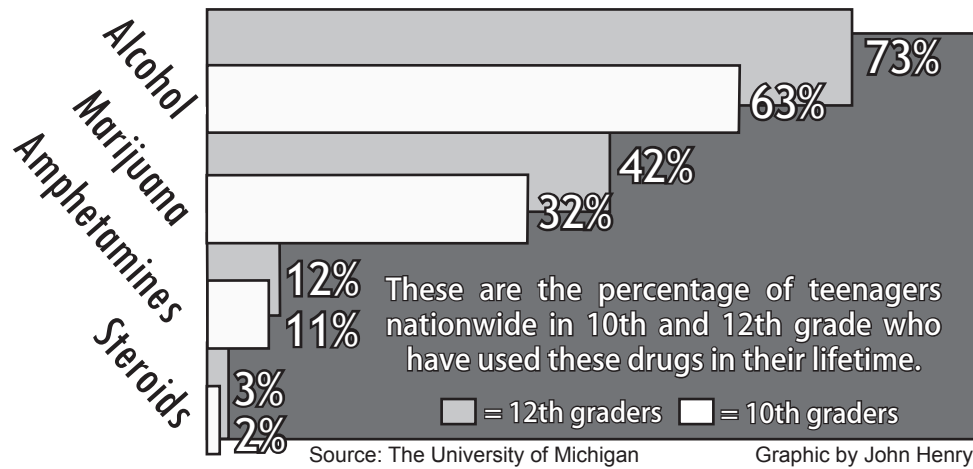
Regardless of the criticisms being placed on high school drug testing, Skowronski feels that H-F's testing policy is helpful.

"If there was a problem, we could get young people help. I think it is a way of making them more responsible and giving them something that they have to be accountable for. I think those two things are very important," Skowronski said.

So far, Skowronski does not foresee H-F implementing any changes to its drug testing policy, but feels that the school's current policy will continue, despite criticism.

"Our policies have weathered the test of time; there have been court challenges, [and] they've passed every time," Skowronski said.

SUBSTANCES MOST USED BY TEENS



These are the percentage of teenagers nationwide in 10th and 12th grade who have used these drugs in their lifetime.



detect if a student has had alcohol 80 hours after its consumption. If a student tests positive for alcohol they receive counseling and their parents are immediately notified.

students for drugs and alcohol constituted an invasion of privacy.

"Medical care and treatment are issues between parents and children," Jacobs said.

Students plan Snowflake for junior high participants

LIZ PALMER
NEWS WRITER

Operation Snowflake will be held tomorrow from 8 am to 6 pm in the South Building. Snowflake is a program designed for junior high students to help them meet new people and learn how to make good decisions in their lives.

Snowflake is led by a group of teen and adult staff directors, who control the program and plan the speakers, large groups, and food for the day. A Support Staff of 14

high school students keeps the participants excited, and puts on skits to show junior high students how to deal with new situations, such as bullying and being offered drugs and alcohol.

"We try to do skits about important things that the junior high kids go through. We do skits about high school, bullying and stereotypes, because these are the kind of things junior high students deal with everyday," Senior Support Staff Member Katie Tangri said.

Small group leaders are also an important part of Snowflake. These teens and their adult counterparts work together to plan a day for their group of eight junior high students. In the small groups the participants play games, discuss large groups, and talk about whatever is on the minds of the participants.

"This is my second year being a small group leader. I really like being able to talk to the kids personally, and hopefully having a positive effect on them. I also try to be a good example

and show them how to make the right decisions in their lives," Senior Small Group Leader Keith Brabec said.

Throughout the day the participants will attend several small groups, which are meant to be personal between the participants and the leaders, and five large groups. The first large group is "Ins and Outs," in which Support Staff and directors tell the participants the rules for the day and the staff is introduced.

During the day Support Staff leads two more large groups, with more skits

about different issues. There is also a large group called personal stories, in which students and guests talk about hardships they have gone through. The last large group is led by Motivational Speaker Eddie Slowikowski, who has spoken at Snowflake in the past.

"The motivational speaker has a really great story to tell and he also makes it fun for the participants. I think the kids will really benefit from his story, and also have fun while he tells it, because they are able to get up and be active," Program Director DJ Staska said.

At the end of the day the parents of the participants come for a closing assembly where the staff is introduced to the parents and the kids see a slide show of pictures taken throughout the day. Support Staff also does a short skit give parents a little preview of the day.

"The overall goal of Snowflake is to make an amazing memorable day for all the participants, and this is made possible because of all the hard work our staff puts into it," Senior Overall Director Rachel Longawa said.

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Rachel Longawa
Overall Director



Photo by Hari Tyagi

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students come to school because it is a warmer place than their homes.

"Many students and parents depend on us to be a warm place, and they count on us to stay open. But, if it is too much for a student to come in and they think the weather is too bad, they can stay home. We give parents the right to call their children in when it is snowy or too cold," Murray said.

Many of the students who did show up for school Tuesday and Wednesday hope the administration takes a closer look at canceling school. "[Administrators] should see how it feels walking from North to South. Then, they might consider cancelling school. Try walking for 11 minutes in

this weather with snow and cold wind blowing in your face and in your eyes," Junior London Johnson said.

For Freshman Nayriah Harris, keeping warm was only half the battle. "We had to swim for gym class and then walk across the path in the blizzard. Our hair was still very wet. We had to come to class late with our boots also soaked and snow all over us, and they still mark us tardy," Harris said.

So, what kind of weather would it take for H-F to close?

Based on H-F's history, Webb suggested, "About 60 feet of snow, but H-F will still be open." Freshman Stacy Matthews agreed, but added, "They would not close school even if it were -60 degrees outside because it would be considered too warm!"

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