

The Effectiveness of Random Drug Testing Programs:  
A Statewide Follow-up Study

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PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE DRUG USE



**STUDENT DRUG-TESTING COALITION**

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## **Introduction**

In August of 2000, the Indiana Court of Appeals ruled that suspicion-less (random) drug-testing of students was unconstitutional under the Indiana Constitution. At the time of the ruling approximately 65 high schools in Indiana had implemented student random drug-testing programs. Following this court decision, all schools suspended the random drug-testing programs. The Indiana Supreme Court set aside the appellate court's decision in January of 2002 and reversed the appellate court during the summer of 2002.

In a previous study released in 2002, the researcher asked Indiana high school principals to compare drug and alcohol activity during the 1999–2000 school year when random drug-testing policies were in effect with the 2000–2001 school year when schools were not allowed to engage in random drug testing programs. Results of the previous study may be found at [www.studentdrugtesting.org](http://www.studentdrugtesting.org).

This study is presented as a follow-up to the 2002 study for the purposes of determining how many schools in Indiana re-implemented random drug-testing programs after suspending those programs in the late summer of 2000. The study also compared the effectiveness of the re-implemented drug-testing programs to the previous school year when random drug testing had been suspended.

## **Methodology**

Sixty-five high schools were identified as having random drug-testing programs that were suspended in August, 2000 (based upon information gathered in the first study). A survey instrument was sent to the 65 high-school principals. Fifty-nine principals responded. This represents 90.7% of high schools with random drug-testing programs.

## **Results**

94% of principals reported believing that the random drug-testing policy discourages drug and alcohol use among students.

88% (52) of high school principals responding to the survey reported re-implementation of random drug-testing at their schools.

73% of the principals reported a decrease in drug usage (compared to the period without a random drug-testing program) among students who are subject to the drug-testing policy.

25% of principals reported that drug use "remained the same".

2% (1) reported an increase in drug usage.

51% of the high school principals reported a decrease in alcohol usage (compared to the period without a random drug-testing program) among students at their school who are subject to the random drug-testing policy.

45% of principals reported that alcohol use "remained the same".<sup>1</sup>

4% reported an increase in the use of alcohol.

40% of principals responding to the survey reported that fewer students had been suspended from participation in athletic programs for drug use since re-implementation of the random drug-testing program.

86% of the high school principals surveyed stated that the random drug-test is conducted using urinalysis

Reported basis for responses:

81% of principals reported that the information on decreases in drug and alcohol usage was based upon reports from students.

71% stated that their drug and alcohol usage responses were based upon information from teachers and staff members.

38% drew their drug and alcohol usage information from formal surveys of students conducted at the schools.

36% stated that their information on drug and alcohol usage among students came from law enforcement sources.

63% of the principals stated that athletic coaches provided information that the student athletes were involved in fewer incidents of drug usage as compared to the period without a random drug-testing program.

Covered students:

98% of the high school principals reported that the drug-testing policy covers students participating in interscholastic athletics.

78% reported policies that cover students participating in extra-curricular activities.

50% reported policies that cover students participating in co-curricular activities.

80% reported policies that cover students wishing to drive on school property.

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<sup>1</sup>26% of principals reported that their drug-testing program did not test for alcohol. Most of these principals responded to the alcohol use question with "remained the same".