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Drugs in school:

We are doing

our best to keep our schools safe.

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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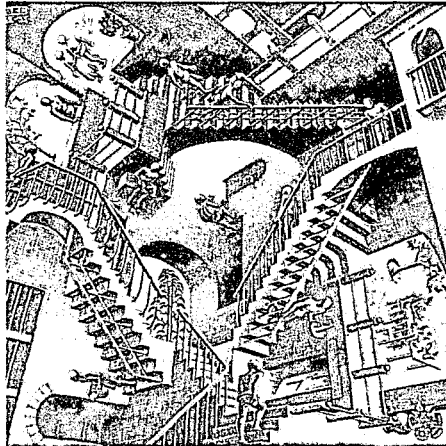
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Contents

SCHOOL SAFETY, NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER NEWSJOURNAL SPRING 1986



- 4 ["Just say no." 118410
By First Lady Nancy Reagan
- 6 [Student problems 118411
and challenges
By U.S. Senator Lawton Chiles
- 8 [Educated suicide 118412
prevention
By Iris M. Bolton
- 12 Agencies stand united
By Lucy D. Hadi
- 14 [Bad news offenders 118413
By Wolfgang Pindur and Donna Wells
- 17 [Delusions of grandeur
By Blanca Gonzalez 118414
- 22 [Schools respond with
drug prevention 118415
- 24 Pros tackle drugs
- 26 [LAPD's Project DARE 118416
By Chief Daryl F. Gates
- 28 Drugs: TV's new 'Vice'

Sections

- 2 NSSC Report
- 30 National Update
- 31 Legislative Update
- 33 Legal Update
- 34 Resource Update
- 35 *Principals of Leadership*

Resource Order Forms

- 29 "What's Wrong With This Picture?" (film/tape)
- 32 *School Crime & Violence: Victims' Rights* (book)

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JUL 15 1989

ACQUISITIONS

Delusions of grandeur

By Blanca Gonzalez

The vicious slaying of a New York youth; the senseless death of a small town high school athlete; the scandal of serious criminal charges against young residents from upstanding, affluent families of Scottsdale, Arizona – besides having made the headlines, a common bond of these stories is that each was the result of the drug and alcohol abuse problem that has spread throughout the country.

Substance abuse knows no bounds – it extends from a rural community in Oregon to an affluent Connecticut suburb to an inner-city neighborhood in Los Angeles, Chicago or any of the nation's metropolitan areas. No one is immune and the education, health and future of our children stand to suffer most as a consequence of this national epidemic.

“Partying” is a popular pastime in nearly every junior and senior high school in the nation, but the innocent games and “spiked” fruit punch of long ago have been replaced at many of today's parties with drugs, alcohol and tobacco which have become an integral part of many teenagers' social lives.

Whether the social lives of our youth include membership in country clubs, high school athletic teams or satanic cults, drugs or alcohol are likely to be

Prepared by Blanca Gonzalez, resource specialist for NSSC. For more information on this topic, write for the NSSC Resource Paper, Drug Traffic and Abuse in Schools.

close by.

- Gary Lauwers, 17, of the New York community of Northport was mutilated then ritually stabbed to death in the summer of 1984. “Police later found that both the youth and his accused killers belonged to a satanic cult that made heavy use of a powerful drug originally devised as an animal tranquilizer,” read an article in *U.S. News & World Report*. The drug was Phencyclidine, known as PCP and “angel dust.”
- Eugene Hoagler, 16, attended high school in the small northern California town of Covelo. He was a “B” student and on the school basketball team. He also played the dangerous game of chug-a-lug. Hoagler died after chugging numerous straight shots of alcohol following a basketball game in December.
- The upscale Phoenix suburb of Scottsdale was the site of a large cocaine bust last October when law enforcement officials came down on 84 young adults. More than one-third of those accused had attended the local prestigious Chaparral High School. Law enforcement officials claimed current students were among the dealers' best customers, according to a report by *Newsweek*. One 19-year-old Chaparral dropout was allegedly responsible for more than \$14 million in annual sales.

It is no longer realistic to believe that drug users and dealers are the sleazy bunch of characters who inhabit dirty

streets and alleys in the “bad” part of town. Alcohol and drug abuse and trafficking are a part of life for the boy next door, the girl down the street and many kids at the neighborhood school.

Efforts to fight drug problems at the high school level sometimes include establishing a closed campus to keep students from using drugs between classes off campus and to guard against outsiders who sell drugs on school grounds. While this may be an effective step in fighting the problem at some schools, others find drug trafficking has developed within the ranks of their own student body. Drugs cost money and selling is common for many young drug users who turn to stealing, prostitution or dealing to support their habit. Consequently, the boy next door may not only be doing drugs, he may also be the dealer providing others with drugs.

Prevalence of drug abuse

The latest national survey of high school seniors by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research shows that:

- Nearly two-thirds of America's teenagers have used drugs at least once before they finish high school.
- About 40 percent used drugs other than marijuana.
- Nine out of 10 seniors reported having experienced alcohol.
- One in five high school seniors is currently a daily smoker with more than half of them going through at least half a pack of cigarettes daily.

◦ Currently marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug with 55 percent of students surveyed reporting some use in their lifetime.

The findings come from an ongoing national research and reporting program entitled "Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of the Lifestyles and Values of Youth," funded primarily by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The 1985 study shows a five-year decline in drug and alcohol use appears to be coming to an end. The findings indicate improvements in recent years cannot be taken for granted.

Lloyd Johnston, director of the Michigan study, says the "fitness craze" that swept the United States in recent years contributed to reduced use of drugs, cigarettes and alcohol "but that may have run its course and may help explain why there is a leveling off," he states.

While the use of some drugs is neither getting better nor worse, the use of cocaine increased dramatically with 17.3 percent of seniors reporting they used it at least once. There were slight increases in the use of inhalants and PCP (Phencyclidine).

Teenagers say drug abuse is the biggest problem they face, with alcohol abuse ranking second and unemployment third as the leading causes of concern, according to the 1984 Gallup Youth Survey. Concern about drugs has risen from 27 percent in 1977, when teenagers named it as the number one problem facing their generation, to 40 percent today.

Drug use was the second most frequently mentioned problem in the most recent "Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward Public Schools." Nearly 20 percent of those surveyed said drug use was the biggest problem facing schools in 1985 second only to discipline.

The American people overwhelmingly support the effort to eliminate drug traffic and abuse. The top issues of public concern are "solving drug problems, limiting nuclear arms, reducing unemployment and slowing inflation," and solving drug problems rated first in a 1985 survey, according to *USA Today*.

Educators, parents, law enforcement officials and other community members

are and should be concerned about the use and trafficking of drugs and alcohol in our schools. Alcohol and drug users often use the term "wasted" to indicate the state of being high or drunk. The term is more literal than figurative, as many parents and educators can attest after they've seen a bright, promising youngster deteriorate into a withdrawn, lethargic individual as a result of drug or alcohol use.

Drug laws and school rules

While some schools identify alcohol and/or drug use, and possession or sales as school rules violations requiring school-based sanctions, other schools strictly interpret such actions as criminal violations requiring law enforcement intervention.

By definition, drug and alcohol use by children is a criminal offense. Clearly educators are obliged to define and deal with drug and alcohol offenses consistent with state penal codes. School districts which fail to control or warn of drug traffic and abuse are subject to potential civil liability.

In his article "Addiction to Zenachlor - Drug Issues from A to Z," Richard Pomazal points out all drugs are strictly regulated or taxed or have varying penalties for violations.

"Other than for revenues, the rationale for endorsed restrictions is to protect society or to protect the individual from him or herself," writes Pomazal in the *Journal of Drug Education*, Vol. 15 (1) 1985. The opiates, cocaine and the psychedelics (such as marijuana, LSD, mescaline) are illegal and regulated by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. Alcohol and nicotine are legal and are regulated and taxed by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The Federal Food and Drug Administration regulates barbiturates, tranquilizers, and amphetamines which are legal only if prescribed.

Federal officials estimate U.S. citizens spend as much as \$110 billion a year to buy illegal drugs, and the total is climbing by 10 percent or more annually.

Student searches and drug testing

The right and duty of school officials to enforce the law in schools and combat problems of drug abuse and trafficking

on campuses has been addressed in major court decisions dealing with student searches.

In 1985, in *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school officials have the authority to search students if there is reasonable cause for suspecting a search will turn up evidence that laws or school rules are being violated.

The decision in *T.L.O.* upheld the 1980 search of a student's purse by an assistant principal at a New Jersey high school. The search was prompted after the student was found smoking in a school bathroom in violation of a school rule.

When she denied smoking, the official searched her purse and found a pack of cigarettes, rolling papers, a small quantity of marijuana, a pipe,



"Relativity," M.C. Escher; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Gift of Mr. C.V.S.

empty plastic bags, a substantial amount of money and a list of students who owed her money. The evidence led to the student's conviction of delinquency.

The New Jersey Supreme Court reversed the conviction and ordered the evidence suppressed on grounds the search was illegal.

The U.S. Supreme Court, however, gave school officials the authority to search students without a court-ordered warrant. Splitting 6-3 in an opinion written by Justice Byron White, the high court said students' rights of privacy must be weighed against the responsibility of school officials to maintain discipline and preserve a proper educational environment.

Later in 1985, the California Supreme Court, in *People v. William G.*, stressed the duty of school officials to

respond to campus climate and school safety issues.

Although the court ruled the school administrator's suspicion that William was tardy or truant from class provided no reasonable basis for conducting a search of any kind, it was noted that "teaching and learning cannot take place without the mental and physical well-being of the students."

Further, it was declared, since society mandates school attendance, it assumes a duty to protect students from dangers posed by anti-social activities - whether their own or of other students - and to provide them with an environment in which education is possible.

Another related issue that may eventually reach the Supreme Court is drug testing. The matter has been heard in a New Jersey Superior Court with Becton Regional High School losing its argument to require students to undergo an annual urinalysis to check for traces of drugs and alcohol.

Superior Court Judge Peter Ciolino ruled in December 1985 that the school's proposed drug testing policy is unconstitutional because it violates students' rights to privacy and due process and to be free of unreasonable search and seizure.

Drug epidemic reaches very young

While the debilitating drug plague has extended off the streets of urban America and into schools throughout the nation, it has spread from college and high school to even lower levels, affecting countless young children.

Before 1960, less than 1 percent of the population had tried an illicit drug and drug use was practically nonexistent in American high schools, says William Pollin, former director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). "By 1978, however, almost 68 percent of high school students had tried marijuana and almost 11 percent were using marijuana every day," says Pollin. "An equally frightening phenomenon was the drop in the age of first use to 12 and 13 year old children."

Approximately 2.4 million youngsters, age 12 to 15, used marijuana at some time during their lives, according to a 1982 survey by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. It is estimated that 8.1

million 12- to 15-year-olds have experienced alcohol and about 6 million have smoked cigarettes at least once.

While drugs seem to have become a casual and often accepted part of growing up in America, it is important to remember that children are just that - children. They are too young and vulnerable to handle the psychological, physical and social hazards involved.

Mood-altering drugs provide a quick and simple escape from the stresses that are a normal part of growing up. Youths who continually blot out pain, boredom or frustration never learn to cope with them. Teenagers who continually "get high" may grow up believing that getting high is the only way to enjoy anything. "Youngsters who do not experience and grow out of adolescence because of regular drug use stand a good chance of becoming chemically dependent adults," writes Marsha Manatt in the NIDA publication, *Parents, Peers and Pot*.

Tobacco abuse

Although not illegal, tobacco is a drug and is used frequently by teenagers. By the time they are seniors in high school, about two-thirds (68 percent) of American students have smoked cigarettes at least once.

"In the long run, smoking cigarettes will probably cut short the lives of more of this group of young Americans than will the use of all the other drugs combined," says social researcher Johnston.

Chewing tobacco, which has become increasingly popular among some youths, is not safe either. People who chew tobacco become as addicted to nicotine as smokers. Since chewing tobacco has been linked to oral cancer, health authorities are concerned that the production has increased by 50 percent in recent years, according to the American Cancer Society.

Despite all that is known about the health consequences of cigarette smoking, more than a third of high school seniors surveyed do not believe there is a great risk to cigarette smokers. A recent report found that more people worldwide will die as a result of diseases related to smoking and smokeless tobacco than any other preventable



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cause of death, including war and famine.

In spite of the health concerns associated with smoking, many high schools have established smoking areas for students. While proponents of such policies say it keeps smokers out of school bathrooms and in designated, supervised areas, opponents say allowing smoking areas serves to condone the use of tobacco by students.

Alcohol abuse

Unlike the relatively new problems of drug abuse, the havoc and distress of alcohol abuse are painfully familiar to many generations. However, many remember when drinking was seen as a rite of passage into young adulthood, but that has changed and children are now beginning to drink as an entry into adolescence.

A 1985 NIDA report shows the following:

- Approximately 93 percent of all high school seniors had used alcohol with 67 percent having used alcohol during the past month.
- The rate of occasional heavy drinking or party drinking rose from 37 percent in 1975 to 41 percent in 1979. It remained at this level through 1983. In 1984, a drop in party drinking was observed for the first time, with the rate falling to 39 percent. (Party drinking is defined as having consumed five or more drinks in a row on at least one occasion during the two weeks prior to the administration of the questionnaire.)
- About 1 in 20 high school seniors said they drank daily.

Approximately 56 percent of seniors surveyed had begun using alcohol before entering high school. Compared with previous students (prior to the class of 1978), more recent classes of high school seniors began using alcohol at earlier ages. About 10.4 percent reported taking their first drink in the sixth grade or earlier; 22.4 percent reported using alcohol in the seventh or eighth grade; and 23.6 percent during the ninth grade.

The National PTA reports that more than 50 percent of high school seniors drink in cars and at least 25 percent drink and drive. The fact that drunk

driving is the leading cause of death for young people 16 to 24 years of age is enough reason for all people to be concerned about alcohol use among our teenaged population. While 16- to 24-year-olds make up only 20 percent of all licensed drivers and travel just 20 percent of the total miles traveled by drivers of all ages, they cause 42 percent of all fatal alcohol-related accidents.

The distressingly high incidence of teen alcohol use and abuse has caused concern among students, parents, educators and law officers. Efforts to fight the problem around the country have come in the form of Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD) chapters, special school curriculums such as "Al Co Hol," "Friday Nite Alive," "Arrive Alive" and "Here's Looking at You Two," and general awareness and education programs aimed at both the students and the community.

Toll free help lines:

- National Health Clearinghouse
800/336-4797
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
800/638-2045
- Cocaine treatment referral
800/COCAINE

Marijuana abuse

Cannabis, better known as marijuana, continues to be the most widespread and frequently used illicit drug in the nation today.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimates that some 20 million Americans use marijuana and 4 million use it on any given day. The federal agency estimates that 30 million pounds of marijuana were imported or grown in the U.S. in 1983. Some sources say marijuana is the largest cash crop in the United States.

By the time they are seniors in high school, more than half (54.2 percent) of America's students have tried marijuana. At least one in every 20 high school seniors is actively smoking marijuana on a daily basis.

A major concern about marijuana is its impact upon the motivational proc-

ess, particularly upon youthful consumers of large amounts. Frequent marijuana use seems to increase passivity, loss of interest and social withdrawal in otherwise outgoing, active youngsters.

Early teen years are considered a difficult period as the adolescent must deal with problems of identity, separation from parental ties and changes that affect body and mind. While this phase is naturally confusing, a drug like marijuana can cause even more tumultuousness and disorganization.

Personality and behavioral changes of marijuana users may include apathy, lethargy, passivity and often paranoia. Younger users tend to lose interest in school, sports, clubs and other vigorous or engaging activities. They may frequently be fatigued, depressed and moody. Their lives seem to narrow in focus as they become more preoccupied with their world of drugs.

Studies show that marijuana actually interferes with thinking and memory. One of the most consistent effects of regular marijuana use is a decline in school performance.

Related problems

Besides the obvious health and legal considerations, drug and alcohol abuse often leads to other problems including truancy, crime and violence. The Rand Corporation of California released a study in 1981 which documented drug use as a major cause of crime. The study indicates that 237 addicts committed 500,000 crimes during one 11-year period. In the rural community of Tipton, Indiana, law enforcement officials said that 100 percent of the adjudicated juvenile cases and 100 percent of the burglaries and thefts in 1978 involved people caught up in alcohol or drug abuse.

Drug use is seen by some as a root cause of many of the problems in public education systems. Former Kentucky Governor Julian Carroll says drug use in Kentucky high schools is directly linked to the state's high dropout rate. A Bowling Green, Kentucky, newspaper quoted Carroll saying that dropouts make up 99 percent of the state's "welfare fathers," 90 percent of its "welfare mothers" and 80 percent of its

prison population.

A national forum sponsored by the National Conference of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 1985 featured one of the first efforts in the nation for educators and researchers to discuss the relationship between drug use and truancy.

The war against drugs

President Ronald Reagan and the First Lady Nancy Reagan head an army of federal, state and local officials trying to help America win the war against drugs. The President stated that while the nation's young people continue to abuse drugs and alcohol, "the costs are measured in lost lives, troubled families

and forsaken dreams."

"Our goal is clear," says President Reagan. "We intend to conquer drug abuse and ensure a safe and productive future for our children and our nation. The federal government is committed to doing all in its power to stop drug abuse and drug trafficking, but the ultimate victory will be determined by Americans working within their home, workplace and community."

The world of drugs and drinking has often been glamorized in movies, music and television, spurring impressionable youths to move into the fast lane of life with no thought of the dead-end that awaits them. Many times it is peer pressure that pushes adolescents into

involvement with drugs and alcohol. Stress, failure to achieve and other personal problems also may contribute to a student's decision to turn to mind-altering substances.

Many drug prevention programs emphasize self-esteem. These programs are designed to address the underlying problems that may cause drug abuse. Such programs are usually aimed at adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15, when they are most likely to suffer from low self-esteem and negative peer pressure.

Before attempting to solve illegal drug abuse and trafficking problems, it is important to ascertain the extent of such problems within a particular school or district.

Some administrators keep track of illegal drug abuse and trafficking through the use of formal incident reports or through a combined process of formal and informal knowledge about drug and alcohol use, possession and sales incidents that occur on campuses. Joint efforts with law enforcement agencies is essential.

Other administrators conduct a survey among a random sample of the student population to determine the types of problems most prevalent on a particular school campus.

Once educators understand the dimensions of an emerging or actual drug abuse problem, they should work with community groups and law enforcement to identify, develop and help implement the best strategy involving the proper mix of apprehension, prevention, intervention, education, counseling and student and public awareness.

The most effective strategies to decrease drug abuse and trafficking among American students are comprehensive, linking the school, home, community, law enforcement units and health services.

Educators should keep in mind that implementing any drug prevention effort that attempts to comprehensively deal with the problem requires resource allocation for teacher preparation, purchase of materials, assignment of significant classroom time and development of a collaboration program involving the public and youth-service professionals. □

National organizations and contacts:

Following is a list of organizations and contacts that offer information and assistance with drug and alcohol projects.

- Alateen, Al-Anon Family Group
Headquarters, Inc.
Post Office Box 182
Madison Square Station
New York, New York 10159
212/481-6565
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Program (ADAEP)
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-4101
202/472-7960
- Alcoholics Anonymous
General Service Office
Post Office Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163
212/686-1100
- American Automobile Association
Traffic Safety Department
Falls Church, Virginia 22047
703/222-5000
- Families in Action
Suite 300
3845 North Druid Hills Road
Decatur, Georgia 30033
404/325-5799
- H.E.L.P. of America
2460 Lemoine Avenue
Fort Lee, New Jersey 07624
800/631-1596
- International Narcotics Officers Association, Inc.
112 State Street, Suite 1310
Albany, New York 12207
518/463-6232
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol Information
Post Office Box 2345
Rockville, Maryland 20852
301/468-2600
- National Clearinghouse for Drug Information
Post Office Box 416
Kensington, Maryland 20795
800/638-2045 (National)
800/492-2948 (Maryland)
- National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth
1820 Franwell Avenue, Suite 16
Silver Springs, Maryland 20902
800/554-KIDS
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Prevention Branch
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857
301/443-4577
- National PTA
Alcohol Education Publications
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312/787-0977
- Parent Resources Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE)
Georgia State University
University Plaza
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
800/241-9746
- PYRAMID Project
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
7101 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
800/227-0438
- Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD)
Post Office Box 800
Marlboro, Massachusetts 01752
617/481-3568