

# 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14

## MEASURING UP ACHS' DRUG TESTING POLICY

**D**rug testing in schools has become increasingly more prevalent since the turn of the century. However, not all students in any given student body are subject to testing. Federal law states that the only students who can be forced to submit to drug tests are those involved in school athletics, who park on school property or who are involved in school sponsored extracurricular activities.

In order to create a more sizeable testing pool, Antioch Community High School (ACHS) tests as many of the individuals of the aforementioned groups as possible, according to Nathan Bylsma, Student Assistance Coordinator for District 117.

"The whole idea of [drug testing] is to prevent drug use," said Bylsma. "The goal is not to catch students."

The student body at ACHS has different reactions to being tested. ACHS senior and cross country runner Ryan Mehaffey has been drug tested and believes he was wrongly accused of using an illegal substance after testing positive.

Mehaffey indicated that he had sustained an injury during the season and was prescribed pain medication that had been proven on multiple accounts nation-wide to cause individuals to test positive for use of cocaine.

"I think drug testing is a good thing, but I don't feel that my situation was

fairly taken into consideration," said Mehaffey.

Mehaffey was forced to miss over 15% of the cross country season this year due to his test results.

"I felt like I lost something that I can never get back," said Mehaffey. "I had a very important part of my senior cross country season taken away from me for something I did not do."

ACHS senior athlete, Mike Perrine feels that there should be more drug testing.

"They should test all athletes more than once throughout the season," said Perrine. "Kids just wait until after they get tested to start using drugs because they are usually only tested in the beginning of the season."

Some athletes seem to have slipped through the cracks. According to Perrine, he was once tested seven times in a season while he was injured when he had several teammates that, allegedly, actually used drugs and they were only tested at the beginning of the season.

According to Bylsma the ultimate goal of the school is to prevent substance abuse.

"Drug testing is a deterrent for many students," said Bylsma. "We try to prevent drug use because of the problems that it can cause individuals later on in life."



### FUTURE OF DRUG TESTING

Since 2001, ACHS has had a drug testing program within the school devoted to helping teens stay drug free, and every year since then the results have improved. Using a test that screens for drugs such as cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, and marijuana, ACHS has managed to keep the number of teens found to use these drugs to under one percent.

Of course, those subjected to the random drug testing are involved in extracurricular activities, such as sports or the fine arts, and therefore there is a large portion of the school that is not accounted for. Some students are not impressed with the effort of the school has put forth to keep ACHS drug-free.

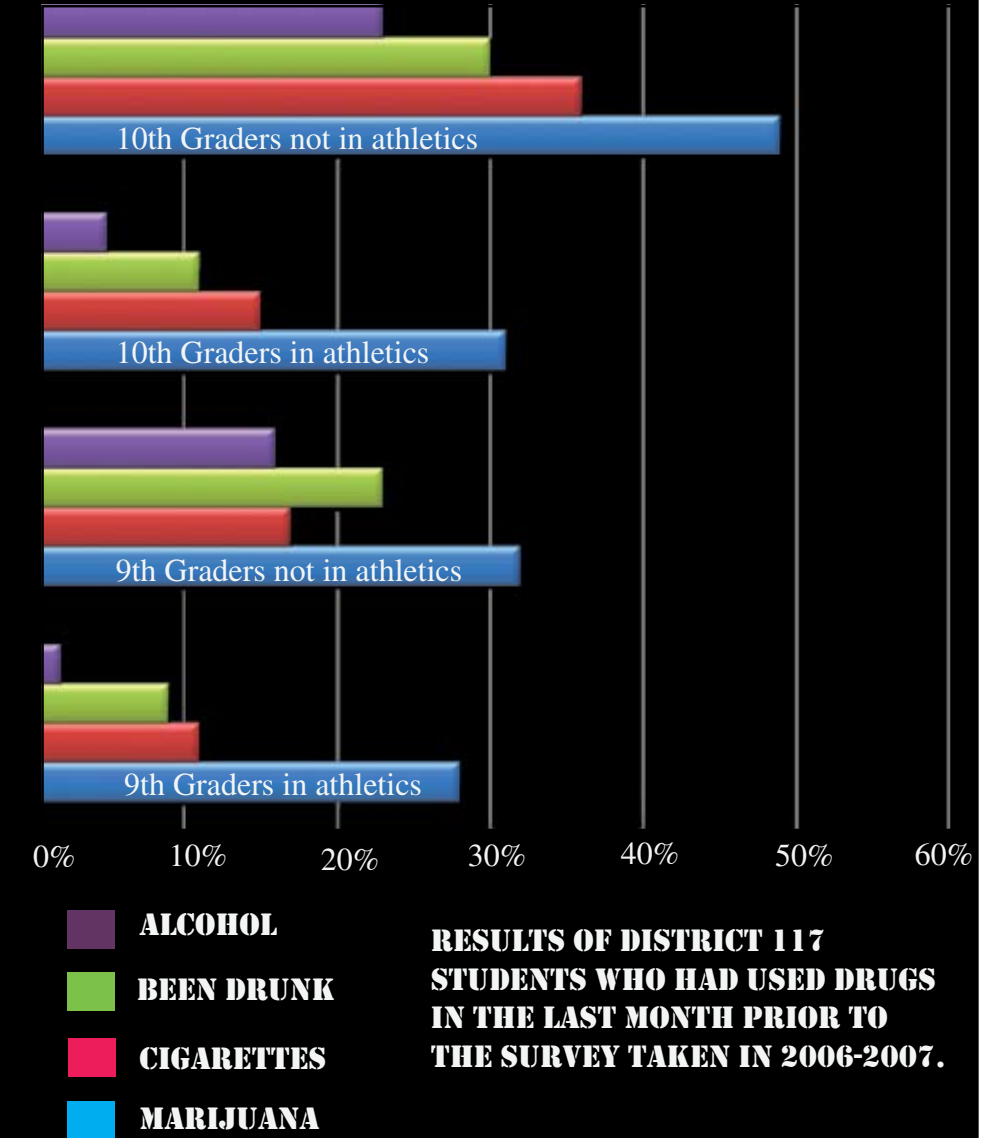
"It seems like a waste of money," said junior C.J. Kanya, "It's like they're only testing the good kids."

With this issue in mind, some have raised the questions, "what else can be done, and what will the school be able to change to further improve the situation?"

In reality the answer is, "not much."

In order for a student to be randomly drug tested, he or she must be involved in an extra-curricular activity, or have a parking spot on school property. Without either of these, the school does not have legal permission to test a student.

Prior to the 2005-06 school year, athletes were tested only once in the year. Since then, some of the rules have been altered. Now, it is mandatory for an athlete to be tested prior to every sport season he or she wishes to participate in. Also, hair samples are tested more often than urine samples to insure better accuracy, and allow for a longer potential period of analysis.



### STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

#### JOSH BRENEISEN



• Senior  
 • Involved in varsity Track & Field, Yearbook  
 • "I think that there are definitely students that should be chosen to be drug tested, it just doesn't seem random to me. I know a lot of kids who are purposely forgetting to go get tested just because they think it's dumb."

#### AMANDA ROMIENECKI



• Junior  
 • Involved in National Honors Society, Student Council, Spanish Club  
 • "I don't think drug testing is a big deal. I have nothing to hide, and students shouldn't be using drugs anyway so I honestly don't see what the issue is."

#### DREW MONCELLE



• Sophomore  
 • Involved in Varsity Basketball  
 • "I personally think that our school spends way too much money on drug testing. There are different ways and different more productive ideas to spend our school's money on. Drugs are probably not that big of an issue."

STORIES BY GARIK NIFFENEGGER, EMILY ORTIZ AND HEIDI SCHOEPP  
 DESIGN BY KAILY NEWMAN AND DONNY THORNTON