

Do you really know the extent of substance use in Davis schools?

The districtwide DavisParentsDo PTA committee was formed to help educate adults about the realities of teen substance use in our community. This is challenging because of course no one wants to believe their child is at risk, or uses, or that their behavior is anything other than “normal” teen behavior. The nature of the issue and the age of those involved also make getting facts challenging: incidences of substance use in our schools is not something the administration or parents can or want to talk about openly because of a need to protect the privacy of those involved. Perhaps the biggest barrier is parents who do not believe substance use by teens is wrong as long as they are still able to perform in school and are successfully staying out of trouble.

The first question to ask yourself is *whether you really want to know* if your child or their friends are actively drinking or smoking (or using other substances.)

If you really want to know, you can learn more about the state of the problem by doing any of the following:

- Find out if your child is attending pre-parties for games, dances or other parties and what actually goes on there.
- Find out if your child is "hanging out" in parks or on the greenbelts with friends and is drinking or smoking before or after school.
- Even if you think you know your child, consider looking for alcohol or other substances in their possession. Clear alcohol in water bottles is very common.
- Are there parents or other adults present and providing supervision at parties or other gatherings your child attends?
- Talk to your school counselors and favorite teachers about substance use facts at your child's school.
- Have a frank conversation with a school administrator in a supportive, non-accusatory manner about how bad the problem is and what they might be worried about.
- Talk to your child's coach or music teacher – often these mentors are afraid of talking to parents because of the backlash.
- Ask yourself whether you care more about your child's academic or other performance than their substance use?

For a list of parents who have pledged to not support teen substance use, or for more information on resources and ideas, visit our webpage at davisparentsdo.org.