

133 BOARD POSITION STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG USAGE

Our schools are vibrant, progressive and successful. Residents of our community have demonstrated their commitment to quality education and their confidence in the Board of Education, administration and staff by recently approving referenda. We come to you now with a different problem, on which money or buildings cannot solve.

We have a serious problem in our District with our students' illegal use of drugs and alcohol.

Over the past year we have discussed and investigated this issue with District administrators, staff and students. We believe the problem is real and significant. We believe the drug and alcohol-related activities involve a large segment and wide spectrum of our students and include use at school and at school-related activities.

In the last year, this Board has taken a strong position in expulsion actions to enforce its policy with respect to school-place violence and other threats to the safety of our students. It is our intent to similarly emphasize our policy with respect to the illegal use of drugs or alcohol. Acts that threaten the safety of our students disrupt the learning process. Similarly, the illegal use of drugs and alcohol interferes with the educational goals that we strive to achieve. Our schools should not only be violence free, but also drug and alcohol free.

In an effort to strengthen our policy with respect to drugs and alcohol, we have taken several steps in the last year. First, we adopted a new policy on drug and alcohol usage that contains stronger standards and consequences. We have established and are funding, along with the Village of Oregon, a Police School Liaison officer, whose responsibilities include in part, assisting our staff and administrators in enforcing this policy. We have taken strong disciplinary actions in expulsion cases before us involving illegal drug and alcohol usage. We have established as a primary objective for the Board of Education our commitment to drug and alcohol free schools. We will continue to work with our administrators and staff to develop long-term programs to promote positive choice-making by our students, for example, the community-wide committee currently working on asset building in the community (BOAT).

In order to achieve our goal of drug and alcohol free schools:

1. We encourage parents of our students to fully support our efforts, including at such times when their children are found to be involved in drug or alcohol-related activities. (The District has confidential resources available to parents that can be accessed through contact with the District's AODA coordinator.)
2. We hope that all parents will become more fully involved in a dialogue about this problem and will engage in communication with the District, parents and students in an effort to stem it.
1. We ask our administrators and staff to fully enforce the revised drug and alcohol policy and to actively work to identify and stop the illegal use of drugs and alcohol in our schools. The Board will, to the fullest extent possible, back the administration and staff in such efforts.
2. We want our students to let it be known that alcohol and drug abuse will not be condoned by the student body and that, more importantly, refraining from illegal drug and alcohol use is not only acceptable, but also the proper choice of conduct.

While our immediate and most visible efforts may focus on discipline and deterrence with respect to our school buildings, we hope that through our actions and the commencement of a dialogue about our students' drug and alcohol usage, the long-term focus for all of us will move from creating drug free schools to a drug free student body through positive choice-making by our students.

Our first priority is to remove drugs and alcohol from our schools. We will take whatever actions are appropriate to accomplish this. But, just as it took the commitment of dollars to build our physical plant, we need the commitment of administrators, staff, students and parents, working together, to build a drug free and alcohol free learning environment.

The Oregon School District Board of Education 8/14/2000