

Drug testing in schools up

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Higher funding and the lowering of legal constraints are encouraging more U.S. schools to test students for use of illegal drugs.

These schools also are expanding the categories of students being screened, reports USA Today.

The legal barriers came down after a 2002 Supreme Court ruling that random testing of student athletes and others in competitive extracurricular activities does not violate the students' privacy rights. The ruling allowed the Bush administration to make testing middle- and high-school students a priority, the newspaper reported.

Department of Education figures show that this year, 373 public secondary schools got federal money for testing, up from 79 schools from two years ago.

Despite the progress, the number of public secondary schools with testing programs remains a tiny percentage of the 28,000 such schools nationwide, the report said.

White House drug czar John Walters says testing will allow teens to reject peer pressure to use drugs.

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