



Calif. School to Test Teens for Drinking

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Students who attend homecoming dances on Saturday will be doing some heavy breathing — into Breathalyzers.

At Santa Barbara High School, officials will screen every third or fourth student who arrives and anyone who appears drunk, said Principal Paul Turnbull. Dos Pueblos High School administrators will use the Breathalyzer only if they suspect a problem, said Principal Quentin Panek.

"There's a lot of heavy drinking going on," said Penny Jenkins, executive director of the local nonprofit Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. "Something's got to be done."

Jenkins said she has seen preliminary results of a RAND Corp. study showing that a higher percentage of Santa Barbara students drink alcohol than the state average. The study is scheduled to be released in a couple of weeks.

Santa Barbara High students offered mixed reactions to the testing.

"I think it's a good idea if they check randomly, but I think they'll probably target some students" including those who show up in limousines, said sophomore Kelsea Peace.

Senior Alexander Argyropoulos said alcohol testing encourages students to use drugs that cannot be detected with the Breathalyzers.

"(Drinking) is kind of part of growing up, something all kids are going to do," Argyropoulos said. "It's better than possibly trying cocaine."

Possibly up next for local high schools: drug-sniffing dogs.

Panek said that dogs made surprise visits five times a year to Carmel High School when he worked there. The idea will be considered later this month by a committee made up of principals, students and a member of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Information from: Santa Barbara News-Press, <http://www.newspress.com>