



**Report Warns Parents about Drugs and Gangs in Schools; Students Less Concerned**

American students are essentially split over the question of whether their school is “drug free,” but students still cite drugs as a major problem facing people their age, according to a new survey of 12- to 17-year-olds from the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.

When asked, “Is your school a drug-free school or is it not drug free, meaning some students keep drugs, use drugs or sell drugs on school grounds?,” 48 percent of students described their schools as “drug free” while 49 percent said their schools were “not drug free.” Drugs were cited as a major problem by 21 percent of survey respondents, far more than the other popular responses (13 percent for social pressure or fitting in) and doing well in school (10 percent). An accompanying survey of parents, however, ranked social pressure as the biggest problem facing teens (32 percent), while just 12 percent cited drugs and 9 percent named doing well in school. **To read more go to:** <http://bit.ly/9Efe7M>



**For more information on HCTC, the latest on upcoming HCTC Meetings and Activities**

**Go To:** <http://bit.ly/an83Js>

**Start a Successful School Year, and Keep it Going!**

As you probably know planning and preparation are always essential elements in a successful transition from summer vacation to a full-fledged school routine. Here are some tips on starting the school year off right!

**Tips For All Parents:**

- Make a big deal about going back to school. When kids see how much you value education, they're more likely to get excited about school.
- Begin helping your child get into a school routine. Have predictable bed times, meal times, and wake-up times. Talk about the impact of daily routines on doing well in school.
- If your school offers a "meet your teacher" or "back-to-school open house," plan on attending with your child. These are important events that allow kids, teachers, and parents to interact.



**For more tips go to:** <http://bit.ly/at8oPW>

**FOCUS ON ALCOHOL AND BOYS**

Although girls are now as likely as boys to drink alcohol, there are important differences in how they drink. Boys are more likely to begin drinking alcohol at a younger age, more likely to move on to binge drinking, more likely to drive under the influence of alcohol, and more likely to initiate sex under the influence, often without protection. Drinking and the capacity to drink in quantity, is often viewed as proof of courage or manliness. However, challenges to “hold your liquor like a man” can have devastating short- and long-term results. Adults need to clearly communicate no-use expectations and community groups need to be aware of the risks adolescent males face and tailor some of their prevention efforts specifically to boys.

**Facts**

- Boys are more likely than girls to begin drinking before age 13. The earlier underage drinking begins, the greater the risk for developing a serious alcohol-related problem, including addiction (Centers for Disease Control)
- Overall male high school students are significantly more likely than female high school students to report episodes of heavy drinking (Centers for Disease Control)
- A survey of high school students found that 18% of females and 39% of males say it is acceptable for a boy to force sex if the girl is stoned or drunk

**What to Do:**

- Contact middle school, high school and after-school athletic program directors and coaches to discuss and develop policies regarding alcohol use among team members. Encourage coaches and others working with boys to educate boys about the serious risks of underage alcohol use, including impact on athletic and academic performance
- Promote the HOPE Youth Mentoring program through Catholic Charities of Livingston County—they are always looking for male mentors and often have boys in need of mentoring

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