

Alcohol Abuse and Academic Achievement Don't Mix!

Student Alcohol Use Academic Performance

There is growing evidence to substantiate the fact that underage drinking is strongly associated with academic and social problems, potentially undermining success in domains of competence that are crucial for successful adult development.¹

- Student substance use precedes, and is a risk factor for, academic problems, such as lower grades, absenteeism and high dropout rates.²
- Alcohol can interfere with a student's ability to think, making learning and concentration more difficult and impeding academic performance. The more a student uses alcohol, the lower his grade point average is likely to be and the more likely he is to drop out of school.³
- Adolescents who are alcohol dependent may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.⁴
- Compared to non-drinkers, heavy and binge drinking students are more likely to say that their school work is poor and up to five times more likely to report skipping school.⁵
- According to recent research, 16% to 18% of teen drinkers have missed school or work because of alcohol use.⁶

Preventing underage drinking must be a critical component of our national drug control strategy as well as federal, state and local efforts to increase student achievement and mitigate school drop out rates.

Lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18 will not solve the problem of underage drinking, but it will lead to lower academic achievement.

SUPPORT 21!

Footnotes

¹ Masten, A., Faden, V., Zucker, R., Spear (2008). "Underage drinking: A developmental framework. *Pediatrics: Official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*. (121)S235-S251.

² Dewey, J.D. (1999). "Reviewing the relationship between school factors and substance use for elementary, middle, and high school students." *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 19(3), 177–225.

³ Dewey, J.D. (1999) "Reviewing the relationship between school factors and substance use for elementary, middle, and high school students." *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 19(3), 177–225.; Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., & Bachman, J.G. (1998). *National survey results on drug use from the Monitoring the Future study, 1975–1997, Volume 1: Secondary school students*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

⁴ Brown, S.A., Tapert, S.F., Granholm, E., et al. (2000). "Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: Effects of protracted alcohol use." *Alcoholism: Clinical and experimental research*, 24(2).

⁵ Greenblatt, J.C. (2000). *Patterns of alcohol use among adolescents and associations with emotional and behavioral problems*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies.

⁶ Ellickson, P.L., McGuigan, K.A., Adams, V., Bell, R.M., & Hays, R.D. (1996). Teenagers and alcohol misuse in the United States: By any definition, it's a big problem. *Addiction*, 91(10), 1489–1503.