

# Miramonte Breathalyzes All Students Attending Dances

By Cathy Tyson

In the past, school administrators always had the option of breathalyzing students attending school functions if they had, "reasonable suspicion" of alcohol use or suspect a student has alcohol in a purse or backpack. The current policy for Miramonte is to screen all attendees of dances, including Junior Prom and the Senior Ball. The school wants to help students make healthy choices, so providing a safe environment where they can have fun is a priority.

Acalanes and Las Lomas already screen every student. Campolindo didn't at their recent dance, but according to Associate Principal Paul Mack they're going to give it a try and see how it goes at the next dance on December seventh.

"We try to be open and transparent in our decisions," says Miramonte Associate Principal Sharon Bartlett. Admission to the Fall Dance went, "very quickly. We had four lines - three administrators and one teacher." Students were required to speak normally into the unit for a count of seven.

"No one complained. This is clearly the way schools are going." Although a breathalyzer test wouldn't indicate use of marijuana, administrators are able to look in student's eyes, exchange a few pleasantries and look for signs of impairment.

No one was found to be under the influence at the dance; everyone appeared to have a wonderful time. The penalty for being under the influence of any kind of substance on school property is a mandatory five-day suspension; the school also informs the police.

"This is not a district policy, but the district is very supportive in helping students make better choices," continues Bartlett. Football games at all of the schools are open to the community, so the schools don't check everyone, but they have breathalyzer units available, if needed.

At Acalanes, Associate Principal Jan Carlson notes, "we check every single student. It's part of the culture of the school. We have an alcohol free environment."



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