

February 23, 2015


Senator Bill Stoltze
State Capital Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stoltze:

The Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) serves the high school students in Alaska by providing athletic and activity events on a statewide basis. So far this school year, 37,884 students have participated in an ASAA event. One of the goals of ASAA is to promote healthy choices through the Sportsmanship and Citizenship policy. In 2007 the ASAA Board of Directors passed a policy commonly referred to as the TAD policy that stipulates consequences for violations of the tobacco, alcohol and drug policy. In addition to policy orientation and consequences for students, educational components have been developed. According to the Youth Behavior Risk Survey of 2013, student reported less participation in all three substance abuse areas. ASAA has worked hard, in co-operation with other public health agencies, to encourage young people to be TAD free. The ASAA data indicates that 217 violations have occurred this year amounting to .57% of the total student population participating in activities. The policy is having a positive impact.

ASAA is concerned with the Alaska vote to legalize Marijuana and the potential risk to our students. As the lawmakers consider regulation and implementation procedures, it is important to insulate the students and limit access to the students. Some things to consider are the location of points of sale near schools or neighborhoods, packaging as "sweet treats" and distribution of the drug to minors. ASAA is hopeful that the lawmakers will be equally concerned about the potential of increased student use and provide clear policy that protects the Alaskan youth.

Sincerely,


Billy Strickland, Executive Director
Alaska School Activities Association