



## **PLACER COUNTY GRAND JURY**

# **Alcohol Testing at Del Oro High School Dances**

**Keeping our Students Safe**

**June 23, 2016**

## **Alcohol Testing at Del Oro High School Dances Keeping our Students Safe**

### **Summary**

Del Oro High School staff and administration became concerned about the continued increase in the number of students appearing to be under the influence of alcohol at school dances. As a result, the school administration researched and implemented the use of an alcohol detection device. The Grand Jury undertook an investigation to determine if a new alcohol testing policy for all attendees at the high school dances was implemented appropriately. The Grand Jury has determined this new procedure has merit.

While the student handbook and the dance contract contain a policy regarding alcohol usage, the Grand Jury recommends that this policy include the use of an alcohol detection device prior to admittance. The policy should also include the consequences of a positive result. Further, written policies concerning training on the use of the alcohol detection device for staff and administration are needed.

### **Glossary**

Alcohol Detection Device	A device used to detect the presence of alcohol on a person's breath when blown into for 2-4 seconds from a distance of 2-4 inches. It does not touch the user's lips or mouth and only gives a reading of positive or negative. It can be set to register whether a positive is high or low.
Breathalyzer	The device used by police and public safety officers to determine the level of alcohol present in the person's blood stream. It <u>does</u> touch the person's lips and mouth and will register a numeric percentage of alcohol present.

### **Background**

On September 17, 2015, parents of Del Oro High School students received an email advising them of a new procedure. The procedure stated an alcohol detection device would be administered to attendees prior to admission to all school dances. This device differs from a Breathalyzer used by law enforcement. In the school year 2014-2015 there was an increase of students appearing to be under the influence of alcohol at school dances. This program was introduced as a proactive and preventative approach to students' health and safety. The Grand Jury undertook this investigation to determine if the administration developed any written policies and procedures concerning the use of the alcohol detection device and its implementation.

## Investigation Methods

- Interviews with Del Oro's school administration and staff
- Review of the informational pamphlet regarding the alcohol detection device
- Review of the student handbook and dance contract

One member of the Grand Jury was recused to avoid any conflict of interest and the appearance of bias.

## Facts

- In the school year 2014-15 students were ejected from several school dances for exhibiting behaviors consistent with alcohol consumption.
- During the summer of 2015 school administrators researched whether an alcohol detection device would identify students who had consumed alcohol.
- After researching options, two alcohol detection devices were purchased by Del Oro Administration.
- Administrators were trained on use of the alcohol detection device by reading a pamphlet and watching a training video.
- On September 17, 2015 an email was sent to Del Oro parents and family informing them the school would be implementing the use of an alcohol detection device. This test would be administered to all attendees at all dances, beginning with Homecoming.
- Students were informed of this new procedure via morning announcements and bulletins.
- The student handbook and the dance contract do not contain written policies and procedures regarding the administration of the alcohol detection device and consequences of a positive result.
- There are no written policies and procedures for staff and administration regarding the training and use of the device.
- The device was first used at the Homecoming dance in September 2015 and all 1200+ attendees were tested. The Principal, all three Assistant Principals, the Activities Director and the School Resource Officer (SRO) were present at the dance. The alcohol testing was administered by two of the assistant principals.
- At the Homecoming dance, no attendees tested positive for alcohol consumption.

## **Findings**

The Grand jury found that:

- F1. The student handbook and the dance contract do not contain the necessary policies and procedures concerning the use of the alcohol detection device and the subsequent consequences.
- F2. Staff and administration should have written policies and procedures concerning training and use of the alcohol detection device.

## **Conclusion**

The Grand Jury commends Del Oro High School administration for taking a bold, proactive and preventative approach regarding students' health and safety at school dances. With this impactful decision to test for alcohol, they are still providing an activity to socialize, dance and support school spirit. The inclusion of the recommendations below will clarify and strengthen the process.

## **Recommendations**

The Grand Jury recommends:

- R1. Implement written policies and procedures for staff and administration regarding the training and use of the alcohol detection device.
- R2. Amend the dance contract and student handbook to include the alcohol screening policy and the consequences of a positive result.

## Request for Responses

	<u>Recommendations Requiring Response</u>	<u>Response Due Date</u>
<b>Mr. Dan Gayaldo</b> Principal, Del Oro High School 3301 Taylor Road Loomis, CA 95650	<b>R1, R2</b>	<b>September 30, 2016</b>

### Copy sent to:

**Mr. George Sziraki**  
Superintendent, Placer Union High School District  
13000 New Airport Road  
Auburn CA 95603