

## Colorado's New Marijuana Law and Children

Dear District 50 Community,

As you are no doubt aware Colorado's new marijuana law went into effect on January 1 allowing for recreational use of Marijuana by people over the age of 21. It is too soon to know what the long term impact of the law will be, but we are taking a proactive approach in considering the possible impact on young people in our schools.

Colorado's new law may mean that marijuana and marijuana food products will be more readily available to our young people. Because Colorado voted to liberalize the use of marijuana by adults, the law may change student perceptions about marijuana, and lead some to believe that its use is acceptable.

It is important for all parents and students to fully understand the legal and health implications for marijuana use by those under 21.

It remains illegal for persons under 21 to possess, sell or use marijuana and any student who comes to school under the influence, or in violation of the law will be dealt with accordingly.

It is also critically important to understand the health impact of marijuana use.

Research shows that the human brain is not fully mature until roughly the age of 25 and early drug use impacts development. It is also clear that marijuana is more potent than ever before increasing the drug's impact. In addition, according to the Colorado Department of Education, marijuana use is also linked to poor school performance and increased dropout rates.

This is not an issue unique to District 50. We believe that every parent or guardian in Colorado should have a conversation with their student at a time they feel is age appropriate.

[Go here](#) to find more resources and information about talking to young people about marijuana.

Kindest Regards,

Dr. Pamela Swanson

Superintendent of Schools

Dear Westminster High School Parents and Guardians,

As you may know, the passage of the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in the State of Colorado may have some unintended consequences for our teens. The fact is we have seen a slight rise in the number of students who come to school under the influence of marijuana in this past year, and a significant increase in the number of repeat offenders.

What all this means is that the time is right for us to have a heartfelt and factual dialog with our children regarding marijuana. Just because it is legal for adults, does not mean it is acceptable for students who are still developing, growing and learning. In fact, the [attached brochure](#) entitled "Understand the Big Deal: How Marijuana Harms Youth" and link to our District 50 web site is a great starting point for parents to arm themselves with the facts. Having a thoughtful and intentional conversation with our children will model our positions as educators and adults, and keep ourselves and our students informed about the negative effects of marijuana use.

Moving forward, Westminster High School will continue to promote a safe, healthy and drug free environment. Teachers have been provided the same materials with speaking points to help guide and promote healthy conversations. Guest speakers have been scheduled for both classrooms and school wide functions in the next few weeks. These are experts in the field of Drug and Alcohol Counseling, and Law Enforcement. Their role will be to inform and provide factual information; much of it is around marijuana risk factors, today's potency of new strands of marijuana and tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, and to outline exactly how marijuana undermines student learning and student success.

Our charge is to ensure all of our parents, students and families have the facts, as we move into these uncharted waters of legalized marijuana in our State. We will all be armed with the power of knowledge.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you feel your child needs help, please contact their counselor or grade level administrator so we can provide immediate support and connect you with outside resources.

[For more information please click here.](#)

Thank you for helping us prevent drug use and dependence in children, and keep our school safe and drug free.

Respectfully,

Michael Lynch

Principal, Westminster High School