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## Drug dogs make first search of school parking lot; student arrested

By: Polly Keary | June 17, 2014 | Monroe News News | 2968 Views

June 10, for the first time, the Monroe School District worked with the Monroe Police Department to conduct a drug-detecting dog search of the cars in the Monroe High School parking lot, resulting in one arrest.

The school district decided to partner with the police department after a March 10 presentation to the school board by the Monroe Community Coalition, which is focused on reducing harmful behaviors in youth.

The coalition reported that survey results revealed that Monroe students experience depression more than average and that a majority of 10th graders said they planned to use drugs. Students also reported that they didn't perceive adults as being strict about drug laws.

So the school board decided to try to deter drug use among students by conducting random, dog-assisted searches of the parking lot.

June 10, student access to the parking lot was temporarily curtailed while a handler and a dog from the Monroe Police Department, as well as another handler and dog from the Tulalip Tribal Police, walked among the cars as the dog sniffed each vehicle for odors of drugs.

"They did alert to some vehicles, but it was less than one percent," said Deb Willis, spokesperson for the Monroe Police Department.

When the dogs indicate that a car may have contraband, the police don't search the car, but tell the school administration which car it was, and the school then has the authority to search or not.

The administration did search one car and found marijuana, and a boy of 17 was arrested and released to his parents.

"That was the only consequence," said Willis of the search.

Whether charges will be filed is not yet known.



The drug detection dog program is for the good of the students, said school district spokesperson Rosemary O'Neil. That includes the kids who are found with contraband, she said.

"Our biggest goal is to try to get them the help they need to make good choices," she said. "What happens depends on that child's journey so far. We want to bring the family in so they know what's happening, so that they can be involved, and find the young person the help they need."

Such searches could occur two or three times a year.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Polly Keary is the editor of the Monroe Monitor and Valley News.



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Kuehn v. Renton School District (1985)

York v. Wahkiakum, 2008

While I see good intentions to eliminate drugs in schools, but not at the price of our liberty. When this type of search produces "less than one percent," it is just a waste of resources.

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April 14, 2015 7:00 pm

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April 16, 2015 6:30 pm

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