

## Drug Testing for WHS Athletes Proposed

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“Essentially, there will be an information session that will tell parents and students upfront. They’ll sign an agreement, that in order to participate they’ll agree to the test. Sometime during the fall season, we’ll have our first test and the agency we contract with will pull randomly a certain percentage based on a random number from a computer program. And we’ll test—anybody that comes back positive. Marshal Gasperson, principal of Watauga High School, sharing the reasons he presented a policy proposing the random drug testing of Watauga High Student Athletes beginning with the fall sports season. The policy was presented for its first reading to the Board of Education during Monday evening’s monthly meeting. It will be on the Board’s agenda again, to be voted upon, during their August meeting. In the interim members of the Board of Education anticipate hearing from parents and community members who will want to share their thoughts about the policy. Mr. Gasperson shared more details of the policy, that parents would be responsible for costs of any re-testing, and he indicated that the policy calls for randomly testing 5% of the student athletes per year. He also shared that the results of the testing will be confidential and that referral to law enforcement agencies was not part of the policy. During Board discussion Delora Hodges asked if other counties had policies calling for random drug testing of student athletes. The Board’s attorney shared that a large number of western North Carolina counties had similar policies that were working well. A copy of the policy can be reviewed by contacting the Watauga County Board of Education’s administrative offices.