



Dear 8th Grade Parents,

As you prepare for middle school graduation and look ahead to high school next year, we want to make sure parents are aware of an excellent local parenting program called **Be the Influence (BTI)**.

BTI provides Marin parents with tools to help delay adolescent alcohol and other drug use. Parents are empowered with facts, information and parenting tips through BTI's website and newsletters. Parents also may gain access to a Parent Directory of participating BTI parents throughout Marin. The Parent Directory is especially useful as your child begins to socialize with students from other schools which can begin in the summer months.

Created as a Redwood High School PTSA program, BTI has spread to other schools over the past several years. It has been embraced by parents at public and private schools throughout Marin, including Branson, Drake, Marin Academy, Marin Catholic, Saint Ignatius, and Tam. We are fortunate to have this resource in our community.

While our students have benefited from classroom curriculum on alcohol and drugs through Being Adept, BTI is a separate program for parents to support their children. BTI is especially important as teens are exposed to more substances on campuses and at parties when they begin high school. Now is the time - well before school starts in August - to continue a running dialogue with your child about what to expect in high school, substance use and your family values, rules and expectations. BTI can help inform these important conversations.

We invite all parents to visit the BTI website at www.betheinfluence.us where you will find valuable information on:

- [Data](#) on substance use in our high schools;
- [State and local laws](#) imposing civil and criminal liability on minors and adults;
- Tips on [how to talk](#) with your child about substance use;
- Tips on [setting boundaries, monitoring your child and effective consequences](#);
- Tips on [how to host parties and what to do when your child attends parties](#);
- [Research](#) on the effect of allowing kids to experiment at home or at teen parties;
- [Blogs](#) with facts on different drugs commonly used in Marin, and more.

How to join BTI. BTI encourages 8th grade parents to join by making the [BTI Parent Agreement](#), whereby parents agree to use their best efforts to host teen parties that are substance free. Doing so is required under the law and supported by research on parenting practices. Parents who make this Agreement provide their contact information, which is added to an online, password protected [Parent Directory](#) of other local parents who also have made the BTI Agreement. The Parent Directory enables parents to connect with one another, including contacting a hosting parent to confirm that their child is invited to a party or sleepover and that it will be supervised and substance free. This way, parents are able to work together to keep their children healthy and safe.

Parents who do not wish to make the Parent Agreement may sign up to only receive [BTI Newsletters](#). Each newsletter focuses on a different drug commonly used by Marin teens and presents the latest trends and research on adolescent use. The newsletters also offer parenting practical tips for the summer months, the start of the school year, at back-to-school and homecoming dances, over winter break and the holidays, and at prom and graduation. They are emailed to BTI parents every other month.

BTI advises that 8th grade parents join before summer begins. First-time experimentation for all teens peaks during the summer months. Some rising freshman begin socializing with students from other middle schools, making new friends. Then August comes before parents know it. While the beginning of high school is exciting, it also can be overwhelming. By joining BTI sooner rather than later, parents can be informed, plugged in and prepared for life in high school!

Please contact BTI at administrator@betheinfluence.us with any questions. We hope that you take advantage of this valuable program, whether its by visiting BTI's website, making the BTI Parent Agreement or signing up to receive BTI newsletters. Congratulations to your middle school graduates. We wish you a safe and fun summer!