

Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Students suspended for using crushed Smarties in anti-drug video.

DEA image in the public domain.Â One day in our college French class,Â we were assigned to do a television commercial spoof. A classmate and I came up with the Pepsi challenge, where we emptied out a can of Coca Cola, and filled it with salt as imitation cocaine. Â A couple of high school students found crushed Smarties candies to be a good substitute for cocaine in an anti-drug video they produced. However, school administrators often being the worst of killjoys, the students were suspended for ten days because, according to Jerome Bartley, superintendent of the Central Greene School District: "Although the individuals involved were not using illicit drugs, the district's policy prohibits look-a-like drugs, substances, liquids or devices." Thanks to Drug War Rant for posting this story. Â From time to time, students come to me to defend them against such types of nonsense, aside from the more common disciplinary actions for drug possession and fighting. I try to reach the hearts and minds of school administrators and student tribunals to avert suspensions; sometimes it works, but sometimes I just get Stepford responses or paternalistic justifications about the suspension being a form of tough love. Thanks to the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education for continuing the fight for fair disciplinary treatment of students and faculty and for giving a more far-reaching voice on this issue than I ever could. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Constitutional Law at 00:00