

## **ANOTHER MONDAY MORNING!**

**By Peter Sack**

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**(Written during Sack's tenure as principal at Manchester Essex Regional Schools)**

It's another Monday morning. I just passed the Old Corner Inn and am less than five minutes from school. I can feel the knot in my stomach, as I get closer to my office. It's not because it marks the beginning of a long week at school. I love being here.

Monday mornings mean that I will spend several hours sorting out the latest violation of school rules/civil law in which our students have engaged over the weekend. Monday mornings are a time to investigate, to question, to meet with remorseful (in some cases) students, and sometimes supportive and sometimes angry parents.

Monday mornings are a time when I break open the handbook to determine whether the school has jurisdiction over weekend behavior, in the community or at a school sponsored event.

I spend Monday mornings determining the meaning of "under the influence" and whether a student who has a drink at 3p.m., and comes to a football game at 7p.m., is "guilty" or "innocent". I listen to rationalizations of why it wasn't so bad to shoplift on the debate trip because after all, the store is a faceless conglomerate that charges too much anyway. I spend my Monday mornings playing lawyer, counselor, confessor, and judge.

What is it about our children, who distinguished themselves in so many extraordinary ways, that causes them to flaunt the rules that we once held so dear?

It appears to me that alcohol and perhaps marijuana use are not viewed as particularly significant problems. But the school has a different point of view. We see the adverse effects of chemical use and abuse by our students: poor grades. broken homes, and death. We are concerned.

We will continue aggressively to enforce the rules of the school but we cannot do it alone. At our last forum on drug use by our students, the panel made it clear that parents need to be more vigilant; parents need to know where their kids are and what they are doing. There is a limit to what we can do and I know that you have your limits as well. We need to open the dialogue again because I fear that one Monday morning I will be attending the wake or funeral of one of my students. I pray that that will never happen! Help me!

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