



November 28, 2016

Re: Marijuana Effects on the Developing Brain

To Whom It May Concern:

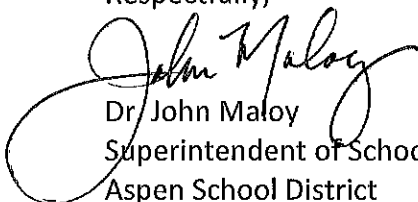
Many parents do not understand why their teenagers occasionally behave in an impulsive, irrational, or dangerous way. At times, it seems like teens don't think things through or fully consider the consequences of their actions. Adolescents differ from adults in the way they behave, solve problems, and make decisions. There is a biological explanation for this difference. Studies have shown that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood and adolescence and well into early adulthood.

Pictures of the brain in action show that adolescents' brains work differently than adults when they make decisions or solve problems. Their actions are guided more by the emotional and reactive part of the brain (amygdala) and less by the thoughtful, logical part of the brain (frontal cortex). Research has also shown that exposure to drugs and alcohol during the teen years can change or delay these developments.

While we still have a great deal to learn about the physical, emotional, and mental consequences of underage recreational marijuana use, we already know that marijuana use in adolescence effects the developing brain. It's important for students and parents to learn some of the negative health impacts in order to better understand the risks adolescents could be taking by using marijuana before their brains fully develop.

Please visit www.principlesforprincipals.org to access invaluable information designed for educators in order to assist them in informing youth and parents about the dangers of using marijuana. We all have a responsibility in educating and guiding our youth to make informed decisions that will keep them physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy until they can make these decisions on their own.

Respectfully,



Dr. John Maloy
Superintendent of Schools
Aspen School District