Early signs predicting substance use:

Behaviors
- The earliest signs predicting substance use are a change in behaviors and mannerisms.
- First sign is a change in friends. The change may be gradual or sudden.
- Teens may withdraw from social bonding opportunities and activities.
- They prefer to be left alone and may stop doing what they are passionate about.
- Watch for teens who may choose to be alienated, especially if social; listen to how they talk about relationships with family and friends and if they refer to deteriorating relationships.

Additional signs
- Decline of academic performance
- Chronically late to school, skip class, fall asleep in class or appear distracted
- Marijuana tends to affect GPA more than alcohol. Marijuana may be consumed during the week where alcohol is consumed on weekends
- Teens make up unsatisfactory excuses or are angry when confronted
- Teens using substances often interpret correction as disrespectful and violation of rights
- Opposing authority is a purpose to keep using
- Some teens are savvy enough to invent situations to effectively mask their problems
- Mood swings are common with adolescent use. Some may become moody either becoming angry and argumentative or burst into tears.

Obvious signs:
- Bloodshot eyes, pinpricks on the arms or possessing drug paraphernalia
- Bloodshot eyes are sign of marijuana use
- Pin-point pupils could indicate heroin use
- Dilated pupils may indicate use of cocaine, hallucinogens or amphetamines
- Students that suddenly possess money might be selling items to earn money for drugs or are selling drugs.
- Watch for things missing or reports of stolen items

Hiding substances at school
- Kids have been found with homemade bongs from soda cans and apples
- Be on the lookout for pop cans with small pinpricks that might be used as a bong
- Watch for display of typical items such as foil wrappers, square folded envelopes, balloons, ziplock bags or mirrors that seem innocent enough for multiple purposes
- Drugs can be hidden in Crayola markers, tampon cases, travel-sized lotion bottles, hairbrushes, electronic battery compartments, under shoe pads in tennis shoes and even tennis balls.
- Virtual students have a bit more freedom to move off camera and hit a vape. The more interactive the teacher is with student, the less the student can use.

Helpful Resources for educators that want to address substance use in classroom:
- https://www.operationprevention.com/classroom
- https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers

Advice: If you come into contact with a teen that is using a substance talk with them openly. Avoid accusation, judgment and ridicule. Many can be convinced to stop when they feel the support of a caring adult.