



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO: LEA Superintendents

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PREVENTING AND REDUCING E-CIGARETTE USE AND OTHER TOBACCO USE AMONG STUDENTS

We want to congratulate you for NC's nearly two decades of success in promoting 100% tobacco free schools, which was the major driver in lowering cigarette smoking rates among NC middle and high school students to historic lows since 1999. However, progress is eroding due to what the US Surgeon General recently called "[the e-cigarette epidemic among youth.](#)"

We know what works to effectively protect young people from all forms of tobacco, including e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cigars and little cigars, and hookah. We are writing both to offer support and to ask for your help by taking additional actions.

Implement Effective 100% Tobacco-Free School Policies

As you know, G.S. 115C-407 requires that every North Carolina school district have a written 100% tobacco-free school policy that prohibits the use of any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes on campus and at school-related events for students, staff and visitors. **Please educate and train school staff to support this policy and tobacco-free school compliance.** This [link](#) provides information on effective communication strategies and enforcement protocols.

For students who violate the tobacco-free schools' policy, we recommend:

- Confiscating all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and e-cigarette paraphernalia, cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco and snuff, and hookah tobacco and paraphernalia from students and not returning them to the students.
- **Using an educational program entitled [ASPIRE](#) as an alternative to out-of-school suspension.** It is a free, bilingual, online tool that helps middle and high school teens learn about being **tobacco free**.
- **Offering cessation support to any student who is ready to quit. If your school does not have cessation services available, see cessation resources below.**

Your [Regional Tobacco Control Manager](#) is available to provide technical assistance on tobacco-free policy issues and to implement a tobacco prevention and control program, including e-cigarette/vape/Juul educational program.

STANDARDS, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

The following free resources are available to your school and community partners to address the surging use of e-cigarettes among youth.

Curricula. [CATCH My Breath™](#) is a new evidence-based tobacco use prevention curriculum that addresses middle and high schoolers' use of e-cigarettes. CATCH My Breath meets national and state educational standards. **The** curriculum is available free of charge to NC schools. More than 80 schools in NC have incorporated the curriculum this school year.

Plan an Awareness Event around [New Updated Tobacco Free Schools Signs](#). This Spring the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch and our Regional Tobacco Control Managers will deliver 2-3 new tobacco-free school signs per K-12 school to LEAs. The new signs clearly communicate that all tobacco products including e-cigarettes are always prohibited on campus by everyone. Installation of the new signs offers an opportunity to have an event to build tobacco-free policy awareness among students, staff, parents and visitors. It may be a good opportunity to invite media in for a positive story.

Engage Students and Parents in Solutions

To engage students, teachers and parents in discussions about the dangers of e-cigarette use, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Scholastic, developed [free resources](#) for teachers.

Help for teens to quit tobacco:

- The Truth Initiative® has expanded its quit-smoking resources to include a [first-of-its kind e-cigarette quit program](#). This innovative and free text message program:
 - Tailors content by age group to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting.
 - Serves as a resource for parents looking to help their children who now vape.
 - Uses input from teens, college students, and young adults who have attempted to, or successfully, quit e-cigarettes.
 - **To access the new e-cigarette quit program, users can text “DITCHJUUL” to 88709.**
- North Carolina provides a telephone and web-based tobacco treatment program free to our state's residents, with a special **five-call program for teens** who are addicted to tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. Teens who call receive coaching from a dedicated Quit Coach, specially trained to work with adolescents. Students can access this program by calling **1-800-QuitNow (1-800-784-8669)**.

Teaching tools for Parents, Coaches and Teachers. [The Stanford Medicine Tobacco Use Prevention Toolkit](#) is a new, theory-based and evidence-informed educational resource created by educators and researchers aimed at preventing middle and high school students' use of tobacco and nicotine products. The Tobacco Prevention Toolkit is committed to providing free tobacco/nicotine prevention materials to educators directly working with youth.

Finally, we do not recommend tobacco prevention and cessation programs being promoted by or funded by tobacco or e-cigarette companies.

Additional Resources from NC Public Health: Prevention Programs and Resources **here**.