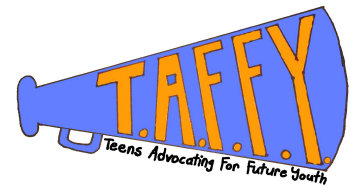


Teens Advocating For Future Youth

106 E. Morgan Street

Brevard, NC 28712

carecoalition@tconc.org



Board Members,

Thank you for considering our proposal to replace the C-stop suspension program with nicotine education programs for students caught in possession of an e-cigarette product. As Teens Advocating For Future Youth, we greatly appreciate the support of the school board in reinforcing tobacco and drug-free educational environments. We believe that in order to continue our commitment to the health of our students, Taffy and the school board need to work together to make a change in our approach to student e-cigarette use.

The current consequence for being caught with an e-cigarette product is two days of “C-Stop”, the alternative suspension program. Being sent to C-Stop removes students from school without educating them about the health effects of their nicotine abuse. It can feel isolating and criminalizing to students, and statistics show that it doesn’t discourage students from using e-cigarettes in school. Although this policy was intended to decrease e-cigarette use in the district schools, it is clear that the approach hasn’t worked as evidenced by the increase in students sent to C-Stop this year for vaping in our county. Additionally, the pervasive attitude among students that criminalizing vaping is doing nothing to address the issue, and the desire for policies which prioritize student health over discipline are two of the chief reasons this procedure should be reevaluated.

Taffy envisions a suspension program that educates students about e-cigarettes, influences their choice to use these products, and empowers them to make changes in their habits. According to popular belief, students use e-cigarettes out of “rebellion” or “for fun”. Though it may start out this way, many students pursue usage to the point of addiction, and past the point of quitting on their own. Therefore, it is critical that e-cigarette use in our schools be addressed as an issue of student health instead of solely as an issue of discipline.

North Carolina has had decades of success in tobacco use reduction, largely due to the efforts of Local Education Authorities in implementing tobacco-free campus policies and ensuring that students receive education about the effects of tobacco use. For continued success, it is essential that we follow this same path in addressing the emergence of e-cigarettes. Evidence-based prevention programs, in conjunction with educational intervention and the availability of cessation counseling, is necessary to win what Taffy calls the “War on Juul”. Taffy has researched available programs and would like to propose the following changes in policy regarding e-cigarette use:

- I. **Discontinue the use of C-Stop as punishment for possession or use of e-cigarette products on campus.** The use of this punishment criminalizes and isolates students who use e-cigarette products, creating an emotional environment for the student that is likely to *increase* their use. As these students are likely already addicted to nicotine, removing them from their normal social environment and placing them in a stigmatized program creates a desire to continue their use as a result of anxiety and isolation. C-stop is proven to be ineffective in reducing tobacco use based on current data and does not

benefit students' emotional health nor provide education on the effects of decisions made by the student.

- II. **Develop a policy where the consequences of e-cigarette possession or use are centered around education.** Providing students with information about the harms nicotine products are doing their body is critical to reducing use rates in our schools. Students who are found in possession of e-cigarette products should be required to complete a nicotine education course designed for that specific situation. *ASPIRE* is a free program designed to be completed online by a student in 2-4 hours. We believe that this should be a mandatory part of a student's punishment, in conjunction with a single day of in-school suspension. Educating students who are already using tobacco products will help empower their choice of cessation.
- III. **Provide cessation resources to students who are found to be in possession of or using an e-cigarette product.** Many students may have begun to realize they are addicted and want to quit. It is crucial that these students have access to resources designed to help them. Multiple free cessation programs exist, including text chats, online programs, and over-the-phone counseling sessions. Resources like this should be made available to all students and parents, but especially advertised to those found in possession of an e-cigarette product at school.
- IV. **Implement tobacco education programs targeted toward e-cigarette use in health classes.** Programs such as *Catch My Breath* are free and require no planning for teachers. Health Educators simply administer the already-made curricula tailored for middle and high schoolers. Implementing this evidence-based e-cigarette prevention program will help to *prevent* student tobacco abuse in the future. This epidemic must not only be addressed by assisting students who are already addicted, but also by preventing the continuation of the vicious cycle.

Our above goals are designed to prioritize the health of students and to emphasize the concern of the growing e-cigarette epidemic. TAFFY asks the Board to consider the policies as a way to more effectively address the use of e-cigarettes in our school district. As the "War on Juul" Committee, we are dedicated to assisting the board in revising current policies to better direct the efforts surrounding student e-cigarette use and the prevention of it.

Thank you again for your consideration,

Teens Advocating For Future Youth - Committee for the "War on Juul"

Sara Megown

Bain Brown

Rebecca Milligan

Anna Long

Jia Emaus