

To: Transylvania County Board of Education  
From: SHAC-School Health Advisory Council  
Subject: Letter of Support for Resolution for Raising Tobacco Legal Age to 21

On behalf of SHAC, we are writing to express our support to raise the statewide minimum age to buy all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices, from 18 to 21. By passing this resolution, we are sending a message to NC that we value our young people in prevention of starting down a path that often leads to nicotine addiction, disease, and ultimately, premature death.

SHAC promotes the goal of protecting every child so they can reach their fullest potential in a safe supportive environment. As a school system, we must encourage youth in their efforts to make healthy choices and maintain healthy lifestyles, free from danger of substance abuse, including nicotine. Nicotine, along with other substances, has been shown to be harmful to a youth's brain, potentially disrupting the formation of brain circuits that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction. In addition, nicotine can cause chemical changes that affect mood, depression, anxiety which are mental health issues already a problem for teens.

Efforts to reduce the use of e-cigarettes is important to our community. Adolescent smoking rates were steadily decreasing but now adolescents' use of e-cigarettes, nicotine vapor devices, hookahs and small cigars has increased dramatically, threatening to completely erase a decade of progress in protecting our youth. In fact, 2019 data shows that 27.3% of high school students in NC reported tobacco use.

Raising the age to 21 to purchase tobacco products in NC will help keep e-cigarettes and other tobacco out of our schools, where younger teens often obtain tobacco products from older classmates who can purchase legally.

Forty-one states have increased their minimum tobacco sales age to 21 to match federal law. NC is one of nine that have yet to match federal law.

Please join us in supporting the Resolution!

Signed:

Missy Ellenberger  
Transylvania County Schools, SHAC Chair