

District Advisory Council Notes
April 17, 2019

BOARD UPDATE

School Board Member Gwynetta S. Gittens attended as the board representative. Ms. Gittens said that the board answered lots of questions at the town hall meeting about safety at bus stops. She said several groups are working together to solve the problem and they are working on providing benches and tables at bus stops. Suggestions can be sent to busstopsafety@leeschools.net. Ms. Gittens also mentioned the “Grow Your Own” bill that would provide funding to train and keep teachers in our area.

VAPING PRESENTATION

Presenting were Mary Lynn Rodriguez, Coordinator, Student Services, and Sara Thompson and Kathleen Wynee, Prevention Specialists, Student Services. Youth electronic cigarette usage is now considered an epidemic by the FDA. The most commonly used are the cartridge-based e-cigarettes, like the Juul. In Lee County the usage is 10 times that of traditional cigarettes. A 2018 Florida Youth Survey revealed that 34.3 percent of Lee County middle and high school students have vaped and 18.3 percent had vaped in the last 30 days. Those numbers are higher than the state numbers of 27.1 percent of students in Florida who have vaped, and 13.7 percent of students in Florida who have vaped in the last 30 days.

The term vaping is misleading. E-cigarettes are an aerosol, not a vapor, and the aerosols contain the following (the ones in bold are known to be hazardous to humans):

Propylene glycol (antifreeze)

Glycerin

Flavorings (many)

Nicotine (found in cigarettes)

NNN

NNK

NAB

NAT

Ethylbenzene (found in pesticides)

Benzene

Xylene

Toluene

Acetaldehyde

Formaldehyde (embalming fluid)

Napthalene

Styrene

Benzo(b)fluoranthene

Chlorobenzene

Crotonaldehyde

Propionaldehyde

Benzaldehyde

Valeric acid

Hexanal

Fluorine

Anthracene

Pyrene

Acenaphthylene

Acenaphthene

Fluoranthene

Benz(a)anthracene

Chrysene

Retene

Benzo(a)pyrene

Indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene

Benzo(ghi)perylene

Acetone (nail polish remover)

Acrolein

Silver

Nickel

Tin

Sodium

Strontium

Barium

Aluminum

Chromium

Boron

Copper

Selenium

Arsenic

Nitrosamines

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons

Cadmium

Silicon

Lithium

Lead

Magnesium

Manganese

Potassium

Titanium

Zinc

Zirconium

Calcium

Iron

Sulfur

Cobalt

Rubidium (found in fireworks)

A 2018 study on 56 e-cigarettes, which also pose a second-hand smoke threat, found the presence of toxic metals in the aerosol. Lead levels were found to be 25 percent higher in the aerosol than in the e-juice because, it is believed, metals are leaching from the coils on the e-cigarettes.

The e-juice or e-liquids are appealing to kids because they are marketed as if they are candy. Some, like Candy King, have the word candy in the name of the product.

The amount of nicotine levels in e-cigarettes vary and it is hard to know how much is in a particular product because the labels are unreliable. JUUL pods contain the same amount of nicotine as a regular pack of 20 cigarettes and the high concentration of nicotine in JUUL pods increases the potential for youth addiction. The concentration is 2.7 times higher than in regular cigarettes and is very potent. Research shows that nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, and alcohol.

Kids are more at risk for addiction because their brains aren't fully formed and their brains build connections faster. Nicotine changes the way brain connections are formed and harm the part of the brain that control attention and learning. Teens who vape are four times more likely to smoke regular cigarettes.

Vaping is not harmless and it is priming kids for addiction. The earlier someone starts smoking, drinking, or using drugs, the more likely they are to become addicted. Ninety percent of people who abuse or are addicted to substances began using them before they were 18. In contrast, only four percent of people addicted to substances began using after the age of 21.

There are telltale signs that teens are vaping. They are:

An artificial sweet smell on their clothes or in their room

Nosebleeds

Increased thirst

Bloodshot eyes

Caffeine sensitivity (so a reduction in amount of coffee or soda intake)

There are also clothing items and other products designed to hide vaping 00 such as sweatshirts or backpacks by a company known as Vapewear. It's slogan is "What you vape and when you vape is your own business."

Another vaping concern is the marijuana concentrates. These are also known as THC extraction, dab, or BHO and are highly potent. They are often similar in appearance to honey or butter. They are consumed through smoking in pipes or e-cigarettes, and eating or drinking them in food/drink products. Vaping the marijuana concentrates is called dabbing and is smokeless, odorless, and easy to conceal. It also ensures an instant high.

The concentrates contain REALLY high THC levels that range from 40-80 percent (compared to traditional plant-based cannabis which is 14-15 percent THC). Possession of one drop of THC concentrate is a felony in the state of Florida which means kids found with it leave school in handcuffs and go to jail. The average THC concentrate has dramatically increased from 3.7 percent in the 1990s to 9.6 percent in 2013 to 50 percent today.

From 2017 to 2018 the number of 8th graders who reported marijuana vaping in the past 30 days increased from 1.6 to 2.6 percent. Tenth graders increased from 4.3 to 7 percent, and 4.9 to 7.5 percent increase among twelfth graders.

A video was shown about a teen whose excessive vaping caused him to have seizures. Vaping poses real threats to teens and despite being marketed as such, e-cigarettes are not safe and are not approved by the FDA for kids or adults to quit smoking. The kids who are vaping crosses all boundaries. Athletes are doing it, honors students are doing it. They are able to obtain it from older friends/siblings, parents, and the internet.

Many of the tobacco companies own the e-cigarette companies and they are very profitable. For example JUUL was founded in 2015 and is now a multi-billion dollar company. Phillip Morris has obtained 30 percent of JUUL stock.

The Question and Answer period included topics such as addressing the issues that cause kids to start using substances in the first place and reviving prevention programs such as D.A.R.E. Currently, presentations for parents and students are made by Prevention Services and the topic of drugs is addressed in health classes. The Code of Conduct is also being reviewed for potential changes to address the issues. In addition a budget item is being added to provide for staff to monitor bathrooms in the schools (where a lot of the vaping activity occurs). Principals are already doing a lot in the schools to combat the problems and have asked for support from the district. There have already been multiple arrests in the district. The district is also looking into software that could detect vaping activity.

It was also suggested that the dangers of vaping be introduced to kids in 4th and 5th grades rather than waiting until middle and high school.

BREAKOUT SESSION

During the breakout session we brainstormed ideas to ways to prevent teen vaping. Suggestions included having students in the district create short videos that could be shared. Drama students could perform anti-vaping skits during open houses.

The issue of vaping on busses was also raised.

When we returned to the main meeting the high school group said they discussed emphasizing the dangerous chemical contents of e-cigarettes and leveraging social media influencers, “cool” teachers and coaches to promote anti-vaping information.

The middle school group offered the ideas of placing targeted ads on instagram vs PSAs running in the movie theaters (which is being done now). The suggestion was also made that the statistics about the number of kid actually being arrested may help prevent kids from vaping on campuses. The question was also raised about a principals right to confiscate and keep vaping devices.

The elementary group suggested that the programs in the schools could be promoted on the school news and that information should be provided in varying languages.

THE NEXT MEETING IS MAY 15.

ADJOURNMENT