



For immediate release February 19, 2020

MADISON, IN - Madison Consolidated Schools situation update on MCHS vaping cases.

School officials met today to debrief events of the last few days and finalize a comprehensive plan including adult education, assistance and prevention, and increased student discipline measures.

“At this time, we are still waiting on final results from the state toxicology lab”, states School Safety Coordinator and SRO Jacob McVey. “Our law enforcement partners have been very helpful in getting us an expedited analysis due to the nature of the activity we are seeing at our school”.

Since February 6, five MCHS students have been transported to the emergency room (9 trips) with symptoms linked to vaping. Of the five students, two account for 5 of the 9 trips. “We feel as though this behavior and these poor choices are coming from a very low percentage of our overall student body”, states Superintendent Dr. Jeff Studebaker. “This behavior is not indicative of the character of our overall student body”.

Yesterday, two adults and three more students were transported to the emergency room following an instance where they became ill in the same vicinity of the building. A vaping device was located in a classroom in that wing of the building but it is still unclear if these events were linked to prior events the week before. All aspects of the investigation are still ongoing.

Today, the district finalized a comprehensive approach to continue efforts to combat the use of vaping devices. “The approach we plan to implement is three-pronged”, shares Studebaker. “We will continue to work with other community partners and healthcare professionals to raise awareness through educational opportunities, encourage our students to seek help in order to begin the process of changing this addictive behavior, and will immediately implement stricter discipline measures for students who choose to continue to use this potentially deadly device and put others in harm's way”.

EDUCATION:

- February 25 at 5:30 p.m. - KDH will host a Community Forum for Adults (parents, guardians, concerned community members) at Ivy Tech to discuss matters regarding the clinical things they are seeing, what you can look for, etc.
- We have sent parents a link shared by the Jefferson County Health Department on the [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#).
- We are working with Dr. Amy Sutton Peak, Ph.D. Director of the Health Science program at Butler University on dates within the next week to address our student body and hold a parent information session on the public health threat related to vaping/electronic cigarette use, specifically in the adolescent and young adult populations.

We highly encourage all parents to make time to attend one or all of these community sessions and learn more about this epidemic.

ASSISTANCE/PREVENTION:

- If a student comes forward and turns in their device actively seeking assistance in quitting, there will be no penalties to the student.
- We will work to offer/partner with those who offer immediate cessation classes and resources.

- We will continue our increased adult presence in hallways and restrooms.
- We are exploring funding options and timelines for the installation of vaping detectors.

ENHANCED STUDENT DISCIPLINE: (*effective Thursday, February 20, 2020*)

- Adjusting the discipline policy specifically for vaping
- Applicable to both MJHS and MCHS
- Applies to campuses, buildings, grounds, and buses
- These adjustments in the discipline policy will override discipline in the student handbook
- First offense
 - Referral to law enforcement
 - 5-day suspension
 - Possible phone confiscation (if reasonable suspicion is met for analysis)
- Second offense
 - Immediate suspension pending expulsion
 - Imposition of fines
 - Referral to law enforcement

In addition, our district has been contacted by a national law firm and will be actively investigating the necessary steps to join a class-action lawsuit against the vaping industry.

We are relieved and encouraged to report that there were no medical incidents reported from MCHS today. Attendance figures from the past several days show no dramatic deviation. In addition, there was no difference in our teacher attendance for the day. Attendance figures for the last two weeks are included for your convenience:

February 4 - 12.7% Absent
 February 5 - 12.7%
 February 6 - 15.6%
 February 10 - 13.9%
 February 11 - 14%
 February 12 - 10.4%
 February 13 - 12.3%
 February 14 - 14.6%
 February 18 - 14.6%
 February 19 - 15.5%

We believe the situation has stabilized and we encourage all students to attend school on a normal schedule. “Our hope is that these additional measures will help educate our community on the dangers of this type of behavior, assist parents in what to look for, get help for a student who wants to quit vaping and make it more unpleasant for those who continue down this path of self-destruction”, shared Studebaker. “We wish to thank our community and law enforcement partners who have worked with us tirelessly to get to the bottom of this matter. The City of Madison, the Jefferson County Prosecutor’s Office, CDC, Indiana State Toxicology Lab, the Indiana State Police, Department of Homeland Security, Jefferson County Health Department, and King’s Daughters’ Health have all been instrumental in this ongoing investigation.

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