

# SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION

## PROMOTING YOUR TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

In order to comply with a policy, people need to be aware of it. Students, staff, parents, and the community are all impacted by a tobacco-free school policy. Therefore, each of these audiences needs to understand the policy. There are many ways to effectively communicate positive messages about the tobacco-free policy. Aim for clear, positive messages that motivate people to comply. Here are some suggestions on ways to thoroughly communicate your policy in order of importance.

- **SIGNAGE:** One of our policy requirements is to post tobacco-free school signs at all entrances to school buildings, school grounds, parking lots, athletic facilities, as well as in the school building, school vehicles and buses. We provide these for FREE - so please don't hesitate to ask! See page 21 for information on how to request signs for your school.
- **DISTRICT WEBSITE:** Post the full district policy on the website for anyone to access and view in its entirety. If you'd like to also highlight the tobacco-free policy separately, include an image of one of our tobacco-free signs so that people are familiar with the message.
- **STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** Discuss the policy at staff meetings and new staff orientations. Provide annual training on tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarette-related school policies for all staff, including teachers, administrators, bus drivers, aides, food service workers, and maintenance staff. 24/7 has a Faculty Training Video and accompanying worksheets that we provide for FREE to any interested school who wants to have an official policy training.
- **HARD COPY OF TOBACCO POLICY:** As part of our policy recommendations, we highly encourage districts to provide students, staff and visitors with a hard copy of the tobacco policy each school year or when visiting so that there can be no claims of ignorance regarding the 100% tobacco-free standards.
- **STUDENT EDUCATION:** Clear expectations help everyone follow the rules. At the start of each school year, during school-wide or grade-level assemblies or in a specific class, all school rules should be reviewed, including policies about tobacco and e-cigarettes. But discussing rules is not the only essential, education about the harmful effects tobacco and nicotine use within the classroom can successfully prevent students from ever starting to use them in the first place. We offer referrals to external education programs on page 39.
- **PARENT LETTERS/CALLS:** Send a letter, email or automated phone call to each parent or guardian explaining the policy, providing the health, academic, and social reasons; outlining the consequences for violators; and requesting support in enforcement with students and visitors. We provide language for this type of communication on pages 22-23.
- **STAFF MEMO OR EMAIL:** Inform school staff – or remind them throughout the year – about the policy and enforcement via an official memo or email. Inform vendors who provide supplies, materials, and services on a regular basis to the school about the policy via an official memo. We provide a memo template on page 24.
- **COMMUNICATE ABOUT VIOLATIONS:** Call or meet with parents if a student violates the policy. Send a letter home with a summary of the policy, details of their student's policy violation, and consequences of this and future violations. If a staff member or visitor violates the policy, meet with them as well with a copy of the policy and hold them accountable to the standards set.