



# Patchogue-Medford High School

NAVY (SEAL) LT MICHAEL P. MURPHY CAMPUS

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Anthony C. O'Brien, President  
Kelli Anne Jennings, First Vice President  
Teresa Balducci-Greenberg, Second Vice President  
Diana Andrade  
Thomas P. Donofrio  
Marc A. Negrin  
Bernadette M. Smith

Dennis M. Logan, District Clerk

**Donna Jones, Ed.D.,**  
**Interim Superintendent of Schools**

Randy E. Rusielewicz, Ed.D., Principal  
181 Buffalo Avenue  
Medford, New York 11763  
(631) 687-6500  
(631) 687-6599 FAX

---

September 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian and Students:

As you may know and have witnessed in various media outlets that the use of e-cigarettes or juuls (known as "vaping") has skyrocketed among students in grades 6-12 throughout our nation including here in the Patchogue-Medford School District. Originally intended as a means of weaning cigarette users away from tobacco use, youngsters have taken to vaping as a "safe" alternative to cigarette smoking. The problem with this thinking and behavior is that the scientific evidence behind the idea of "safe vaping" is inconclusive at best, and the amount of nicotine students inhale when they use these devices is very high. In addition to the exposure of nicotine, the lungs also become exposed to a variety of chemicals produced during the heating/vaporizing process. As an educator, I am astounded with the rapid growth in use that I am witnessing among the students at the high school. The students that we have spoken to about their use have expressed to us that they are becoming addicted to the nicotine blast vaping provides, in addition to being the new "cool" thing to do.

Significantly, we have also learned through past on-site district presentations about this new phenomenon that juul cartridges, the part of the device that contains the nicotine oil, can be altered and that other substances can be substituted, including marijuana concentrates, which students then use to get high. When students use these devices there is no smoke and in some cases no apparent odor; as a student exhales there is just a bit of vapor that quickly dissipates, hence the term "vaping."

Since the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year we have been handling vaping incidents on school grounds through the disciplinary measures available through our district code of conduct. Clearly, these materials have no place in school or on school grounds. Moreover, with the potential for vaping to also be a form of drug use, there comes a need to respond more vigorously to this matter of student health and safety. The Board of Education supports the efforts of the administration and staff of the district in this regard and, therefore e-cigarettes, juuls and all vaping materials will be classified in the code of conduct as drug paraphernalia. Students found using, or in possession of these materials or any of the parts thereof will be subject to a five day out-of-school suspension. Additionally, a referral may be made to the Superintendent of Schools for the consideration of further disciplinary measures.

Please speak with your children about vaping. It is widespread and your children know about it. I have had students with a variety of future aspirations in my office because of vaping. Ask your children questions and check their book bag for these materials. They can resemble traditional tobacco cigarettes (cig-a-likes), cigars, or pipes, or even everyday items like pens or USB memory sticks.

For more information, please check these resources:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>

[http://www.collegiatetimes.com/lifestyles/juul-the-new-cigarette/article\\_217f6b96-972d-11e7-b263-4f432ae36bc9.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/lifestyles/juul-the-new-cigarette/article_217f6b96-972d-11e7-b263-4f432ae36bc9.html)

Thank you for your support and cooperation regarding this matter of keeping our children healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Randy E. Rusielewicz, Ed.D.  
Principal