

## Admin deals with vaping issues among students

by Sophie K. Long  
Staff Reporter

The smell of cotton candy fills the bathroom stalls in high schools across the country, masking the hidden danger of a vape.

Vaping is the use of battery-operated devices that produce nicotine, flavoring, or other drugs in the form of aerosol.

When someone vapes, nicotine absorbs rapidly and reaches the brain quickly, emitting a dopamine surge resulting in feelings of pleasure and reward. The primary addictive chemical in vapes is nicotine. It rewires the developing brain, especially in teens, affecting attention and impulse control.

The difference between cigarettes and vapes is that vapes heat liquid to make an aerosol, while cigarettes burn tobacco, which creates smoke. Both involve inhaling nicotine and/or other substances into their lungs.

Principal Jason Holland has been making morning announcements over the intercom including data from the latest vape reports from the sensors in the bathrooms.

"They dropped drastically. . . They dropped in half immediately," Holland said.

Although numbers are decreasing, they have still been discussing ways to help more such as warning kids of the effects and future problems that vapes cause. They are planning to meet with ninth graders for many reasons, but to include the problems of the higher number of vaping among the freshmen class.

The total number of vapers that have been found this year may be less than expected but are still more than they should be. There have been 17 regular vape reports, 15 being first offenses and two being repeat offenders. Not only has

there been regular vapes found, there have also been THC vapes.

THC vapes have cannabis oils and often deliver a much more potent, fast-acting cannabis experience with distinct flavors from aromatic compounds found in many plants that provide distinct smells and flavors called terpenes.

The number of vape reports have been unevenly spread out across grades. For regular vapes there were 11 for ninth grade, three for 10th, three for 11th and none for seniors. For THC vapes there have been five for ninth grade, one for 10th, one for 11th and none for seniors.

Student One vaped for over a month and then decided to quit.

"I didn't see a point because it didn't change how I felt," Student one said.

Although they did not feel better, Student One said that they felt drowsier at the times that they did vape. Many addictions, such as vapes, come from many places.

"I bought it from a friend at the fair," Student One said.

While in the middle of their vaping "spree," Student One was caught at school and stated that in a way, it helped him stop.

Student Two vapes and has been for a year and a half, the influence coming from a family member.

"I started because of my Dad. I saw him do it a lot, and I thought it would be cool," Student Two said.

While the addiction may have started from a close relative, it has been enabled by many more.

"There is a gas station down my road that gives them out for free, so they don't really care about ID," Student Two said.

Many people disregard the effects that vaping or even smoking can have on their health in pres-



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ent time or even in the long run.

"I didn't take it into consideration at the time," Student One said.

Some respiratory effects are major lung damage, such as scarring and narrowing of the airways. Other side effects are asthma and collapsed lungs. A collapsed lung is a condition where air escapes from the lung and fills the space between the lung and the chest wall, preventing the lung from expanding fully and making it difficult and painful to breathe.

Cardiovascular effects include increased heart rate and blood pressure, higher probability of heart attack or stroke and endothelial dysfunction. Endothelial dysfunction is when the inner lining of blood vessels stop working properly that leads to vessel narrowing.

Neurological problems can include effects to brain development, causing nicotine dependence, dizziness and seizures.

Lastly, there are other health side effects that include gastrointestinal issues, such as nausea and vomiting, oral health problems, such as increased risk of gum disease and nicotine poisoning.

That is just the health consequence side of it. There is a whole other side for possessing drugs illegally or having them on their person at school.

Through these school punishments, adults have worked on learning opportunities.

"When they go to alternative school, they have talked about using an online curriculum that has modules that provide some of the information and things that help, to make them complete that as part of their alternative school punishment before they can come back," assistant principal Kristen Davis said.

This idea for online "vaping classes" has been tossed around to be a possible use for punishment when someone gets caught at the

high school to help them quit.

For some people who vape, hearing the side effects might just throw them off the path, for others that might not be the case. If not there are many ways to quit or places to get help to quit.

One can consider talking to a counselor and receiving medication to help stop the addiction. Another way would be making a quit plan that includes recognizing triggers and pushing them into a healthy routine. If a student decides to quit, but know it cannot done alone, there are "quit lines" where he or she can speak to trained quit coaches. The main phone number is 1-800-QUIT-NOW, and they can find tips and tools at [CDC.gov/Quit](https://www.cdc.gov/quit), [Smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) and [Smokefree Teen](https://www.smokefree.com).

*Editor's Note: Due to the sensitivity of the issue and school disciplinary policies, students who interviewed for this story were not identified.*

## CTE opens new culinary building

by Ariel McDaniel  
Staff Reporter

The high school culinary department is thrilled about the upcoming opening of their new building. The highly anticipated building is on track to open their doors on Jan. 1, 2026.

The excitement is noticeable among teachers Danielle Frey and Ashton Estis, who are eagerly waiting for the opening especially after all their hard work and consideration of what was put into this new building. The kitchen will feature commercial equipment that their students previously did not have access to, allowing for a better training experience.

"I am so excited. There is a lot that we will get to do and it's a great opportunity for the kids," Estis said. "It will allow for more hands-on teaching in the kitchen."

Some additional features to their new kitchen include gas stoves, combination ovens, serving lines and a demo area.

The building design will change how the program is taught. Frey noted that the main difference is that both Year I and II will be together which allows for a more collaborative environment. The new facility will have a bigger capacity than what they are used to, which will allow them to hold up to 30 people. It also gives them the opportunity to cater to a larger scale that better prepares them for life after high school.

The new facility gives relief to the culinary staff as it gets rid of old headaches from the previous kitchen.

"In the summertime it is too hot and in the winter it is too cold," Frey said. "It was also so crowded so we

will now have a lot more space."

The instructors had a significant input into the design and layout of the new space.

"It was up to us because we knew how it needed to be, and it turned out even better," Frey said.

The construction of the building was made possible primarily through state grants, with a big push from former state representative Doug McLeod, who advocated for the new facility and secured funding. There was also equipment donated by Ingalls Shipbuilding.

"I am truly excited, and our culinary students are going to have a big tour," Frey said.

The new culinary building is set to have a big impact on the high school students when they step into a professional kitchen and prepare for their future careers.



photo/ Ariel McDaniel

**Cooking Up Greatness-** The CTE department is ready to show off its new addition. Doors will open to the new kitchen and classrooms when students return on January 5. Both culinary instructors will now have plenty of room for their students to learn and work together.