

'Juuling' Craze: Schools Scramble to Deal with Student Vaping

Education Week By [Evie Blad](#) May 4, 2018

After years of aggressive anti-tobacco campaigns aimed at teenagers, students have largely rejected smoking, but many have tried vaping, sending school leaders scrambling to revise discipline policies and drug prevention classes to confront the new trend of inhaling flavor-infused nicotine vapor.

Adding urgency to those efforts: A small, sleek device that could be easily mistaken for a USB drive has joined the market of vaping and e-cigarette products. The device, called a Juul, has surged in popularity in the last year, in part because its low-profile design allows students to easily conceal their habit and inhale the flavored nicotine vapor in school restrooms, hallways, and even classrooms undetected.

Like many trends among teenagers, vaping and "juuling" gained a foothold among young people long before adults and school administrators realized the scale of the problem, principals said, and now they are rushing to catch up.

"I think it's everywhere, and my school is no different," said Francis Thompson, the principal of Jonathan Law High School in Milford, Conn. "I think it's the next health epidemic for kids."

Some students are open about their vaping habits, sharing Youtube videos about how to do tricks, like blowing rings and "ghosting," slang for exhaling a plume of vapor and quickly drawing it back into the mouth. In some videos, students as young as 13 share tips for concealing Juuls and other vaporizers in the sleeves of their hoodies so they can be used in school hallways and in hollowed-out markers to carry them in their backpacks without getting caught.

"You get super buzzed off of it," said Kyler, a teenager who posted a video about getting suspended for having a Juul.

Appealing to Youth

E-cigarettes and other vaping products, like Juuls, are pitched as alternatives to traditional cigarettes for adults who want to kick the habit. But health experts and anti-smoking groups say they've quickly grown a secondary market among minors attracted to the novelty and flavors like mango, caramel candy, and gummi bear.

Vaping can quickly lead to nicotine addiction, the report warned, which may lead some teens to start smoking traditional cigarettes.

In 2017, 5.4 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported smoking a cigarette in the last 30 days, according to Monitoring the Future, a nationally representative student survey administered by the University of Michigan. 12% of those **students reported vaping** in that time frame. Juul, which currently makes up about 60 percent of e-cigarette sales tracked by Nielsen data.

The device, smaller and more discreet than its competitors, has attracted new users, some principals say. An April survey by the Truth Initiative, which advocates against tobacco use, found that 63 percent of Juul users ages 15-24 were not aware the product "always contains nicotine."

FDA Crackdown

There's no research about the long-term effects of vaping. While the cartridges used in vaping devices may contain fewer harmful chemicals than traditional cigarettes, some newer models deliver roughly the same amount of nicotine as a cigarette, creating additional concerns, said Dave Dobbins, the chief operating officer of the Truth Initiative. So while vaping may be less dangerous than smoking, it's still harmful, he said.

Educators said they are also concerned that the devices can be used to consume marijuana and that some flavor cartridges don't provide a complete ingredients list, leaving students unsure of what they are inhaling.

"For the longest time, nobody smoked; kids weren't into that anymore," said Brad Seamer, the assistant principal of Harrisburg High School in Harrisburg, S.D. "With the vaping, kids are really into that. It's not a certain kind of kids, it's a cross-section of my school."

Vaping in the Bathroom

Thompson, the Connecticut principal, said vaping is more discreet than smoking because the vapor leaves less of a trail and the smells are harder to detect. The school shut down some bathrooms and tracked students' use of others. In talking to students, Thompson discovered they were experimenting with the products in the school's facilities and that some considered themselves addicted. The 900-student school has disciplined about 40 students for vaping this year, issuing in school suspension as a consequence, same punishment as smoking.