

TITLE: Support of the Comprehensive Tobacco-Free School District Policy to protect the health of Alaskan students and communities

WHEREAS, More than 3 million high school students and 600,000 middle school students in the United States smoke cigarettes¹, including 1 in 6 Alaska High School Students²; and

WHEREAS, The younger people begin smoking cigarettes, the more likely they are to become strongly addicted to nicotine for a lifetime³; and

WHEREAS, The percentage of teens in Alaska using smokeless tobacco products at 8% has been consistently higher than the U.S. national average²; and

WHEREAS, Schools are often a vital and central gathering place for the entire community hosting sporting events, dances, funerals, potlucks, health fairs, concerts, community lunches, etc.; and

WHEREAS, The image of older youth and adults using tobacco influences younger children to try and start using, or older youth can serve as positive role models; and

WHEREAS, Communication is necessary to enforce a comprehensive tobacco-free policy⁴; and

WHEREAS, Tobacco use is an addictive disease and not merely a discipline manner⁵, teens should be provided options for treatment; and only a dozen Alaska school districts currently include progressive consequences regarding tobacco violations in their existing policy⁶; and

WHEREAS, Students who notice staff/visitors/general public who violate a tobacco-free policy have the right to safely report to a higher-standing authority; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive tobacco-free policy includes all students, staff, visitors and the general public*;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the ATCA Youth Leaders coalition supports a Comprehensive Tobacco-Free school policy* in all districts around that state that promotes general health and welfare for students and all individuals in the school environment, protects future generations and reinforces tobacco-free norms and attitudes (AASB BP 3513.3 Tobacco Free Schools and BP 5131.62 Students: Tobacco).

ACTION STATEMENT:

This resolution is to be delivered to all school districts in Alaska, the Association of Alaska School Boards and the Alaska Association of School Administrators:

Association of Alaska School Boards
1111 West 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

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Alaska Association of School Administrators
326 West 4th Street, Suite 404
Juneau, AK 99801

Sources:

1. U.S. Surgeon General's Report, Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults, 2012.
2. Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011.
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm
3. CDC. [Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). [pdf 28M] Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994. [Accessed 2008 Jun 23].
4. North Dakota Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Comprehensive Tobacco Free School Policy Toolkit. Pg. 19
<http://www.ndhealth.gov/tobacco/Schools/School%20Policy%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
5. NC Department of Health and Human Services, Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, 4/5/12, <http://www.nctobaccofreeschools.org/enforce/TFS-policy-violation-consequences.pdf>
6. State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program school district assessment, 2012.

*A Comprehensive Tobacco-Free school policy as defined by “AASB BP 3513.3 Tobacco Free Schools and BP 5131.62 Students” includes students, staff, visitors, and the general public. It is in effect 365 days/year and 24 hours/day. The model policy recommended by the ATCA Youth Leaders coalition is adopted by the State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program and the Association of Alaska School Boards (attached).