

# Tobacco-Free Schools Project

Western Suffolk BOCES

Long Island Regional Student Support Services Center

## Providing smoking students a Second Chance

Quitting smoking remains high on the list of New Years resolutions for many. Young people want to quit according to New York State Department of Health. The Youth Tobacco Survey (2004) reported that 47% of middle school and 53% of high school smokers say they want to quit smoking. Student smokers caught smoking on school property will now have a second chance to quit through a new educational program.

Students addicted to tobacco have difficulty concentrating in class and coping with the

inability to smoke for an entire school day. Tobacco-Free Schools recommends offering cessation opportunities to help. But what happens when students are caught smoking on school property? This is a violation of the law. Punitive measures are used as a consequence many times. We encourage schools to use alternatives to suspension as an optional consequence.

**Second Chance: A Self-Directed Alternative to Suspension Program for Tobacco-Free Schools Policy Violators** offers an opportunity to

educate students about the benefits of not using tobacco and support student smokers' interest in quitting, or reducing their tobacco use; while contributing to schools in compliance with tobacco-free schools policies.

**Free copies of *Second Chance: A Self-Directed Alternative to Suspension Program for Tobacco Free Schools Policy Violators*** are being provided through Western Suffolk BOCES to Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester schools that have adopted comprehensive tobacco policies.

## National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) urges strong school tobacco policies

NASBE's latest recommendations taken from their school health policy guide, *Policies to prevent Tobacco Use*, are urging state boards of education to strengthen their tobacco policies in order to make schools "tobacco-free environments." They are recommending that policies strictly prohibit the use of tobacco by any students, staff, and visitors in school buildings, on school grounds, and at all school-related activities. They are

also urging schools to ban all tobacco-related promotions and institute educational prevention programs.

If these recommendations sound familiar, it is because they are congruent with the *Tobacco-Free Schools Project (TFSP)* and reinforce our mutual efforts to protect the health of students and faculty while improving student achievement. This strong NASBE stance advances CDC's Guidelines

for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction by supporting the development and enforcement of a school policy on tobacco use.

Research has shown that the most effective school anti-tobacco policies take a comprehensive approach in order to ensure that students receive consistent anti-tobacco-use messages from every direction. TFSP provides the tools to help you accomplish this.

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### TEN GOOD REASONS TO HAVE A 100% TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL

- Provides positive adult role model for students.
- Protects children from developing an addiction to tobacco.
- Provides a healthier environment by reducing exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke.
- Reinforces and supports instruction in the classroom and other programs.
- Changes the social norms regarding tobacco use.
- Counters the targeting of children by the tobacco industry.
- Complies with laws prohibiting smoking in buildings.
- Prepares students for tobacco-free workplaces and communities.
- Protects schools from the risk of future liability.
- Reduces the risk of fires due to smoking materials.

\*Adapted from North Carolina's 100% Tobacco-Free Schools Initiative funded by the Health and Wellness Fund

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The Tobacco-Free Schools Project (TFSP) is part of a state-wide effort of the Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program. The program addresses the importance of comprehensive tobacco policies in school systems to reduce youth initiation and exposure to secondhand smoke. Western Suffolk BOCES School Policy Tobacco Specialists are helping schools in Nassau, Suffolk, and now in Westchester County to achieve this goal. Over 60 secondary schools in Nassau and Suffolk are working on their tobacco policies. Last January, Western Suffolk BOCES was awarded a new contract to begin working with Westchester County schools. To see a list of the participating schools please visit the Western Suffolk BOCES website: <http://lirsssc.wsboces.org>

Schools that sign on to the project receive expertise, technical assistance, tools, and resources to assess, develop, implement, and evaluate their tobacco policies. Schools will also receive mini grants and signage to help them sustain a healthier school community.



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## Help Stop Tobacco Retail Advertising



Each day, more than 4,000 kids try smoking for the first time and another 2,000 kids become regular smokers. 85% of these kids prefer Marlboro, Camel and Newport — three of the most heavily advertised brands (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

(2005). *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Rockville, MD: SAMSHA Office of Applied Sciences). Studies show that youth are three times more sensitive to tobacco advertising than peer pressure. Knowing this, the tobacco industry spends over \$13 billion annually on marketing (U.S. Federal Trade Commission (2007). *Cigarette Report for 2004 and 2005.*, 2007. Washington D.C.,:Federal Trade Commission).

To help combat these marketing techniques used by Big Tobacco a statewide initiative has been developed to reduce retail tobacco advertising in and around stores throughout the state. A guide has been created that focuses on eliminating tobacco sales to minors and

was distributed to all tobacco retailers in the area. Local municipalities have been asked to sign resolutions to support reduction in tobacco signage. Schools and communities have been educated on this topic preparing them to ask local tobacco retailers in their area to reduce, rearrange, or eliminate tobacco advertising in their stores.

To learn more about this campaign contact the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island (TAC) at 631/265-3848 x 15 or visit the website [www.BreatheFreely.org](http://www.BreatheFreely.org). In Westchester County contact POWR Against Tobacco at 914/347- 2094 x 18 or visit the website: <http://powragainsttobacco.org>

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