



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Escape the VAPE
(Health and Human Services Category)

Executive Summary:

In September 2023, Chesterfield County Public Schools and Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services joined forces to offer Escape the Vape programming for staff, families, and students in order to combat the growing epidemic of e-cigarette use. The goals of this programming are to debunk myths about vaping, share the facts on addiction and the harmful effects it has on the developing brain, and encourage families to talk early and often to their children about the negative effects of vaping. Programs have included virtual and in person opportunities. This community wide awareness campaign has included expert guests from the Virginia Department of Health, the nonprofit group Parents Against Vaping, and local mental health support specialists. To date, over 500 families and 50 county staff members have taken advantage of Escape the Vape programming opportunities.

Problem or need addressed by the program:

According to the Virginia Department of Health, vaping is an epidemic among youth with more than one in four high school students and one in ten middle school students reporting vaping in the last 30 days. The use of nicotine is addictive, harms the developing brain, and has negative effects on student achievement and self-esteem. Chesterfield is not immune to this problem. School administrators and families have voiced health and disciplinary concerns about the growing trend of e-cigarette use. Community wide programming is necessary to combat misinformation and myths about vaping being a safe alternative to smoking. Educating teachers, families, health care providers, and youth on the facts, the health risks of vaping, and the signs of addiction is necessary. Everyone in the community plays significant role in protecting our children from the dangers of vaping and nicotine dependence. Most importantly, families need to be empowered to have productive conversations with their children early and often about the dangers of drug and substance use.

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Program Description:

Recognizing that the solution to safeguarding our youth would be multi-faceted and require the involvement multiple community stakeholders, the school division's Office of Family and Community Engagement launched a coordinated effort engaging partners from the Chesterfield Mental Health and Support Services, regional professionals in substance abuse and addiction, and non-profits to merge their individual efforts around e-cigarette abuse, trends, and how they saw their work aligned with other programmatic resources happening within the community. This discovery process provided an opportunity to asset map existing resources, determine what opportunities and gaps prevented teens and their families from accessing the resources and identify areas of understanding that existed in the community pertaining to e-cigarette use. Some of the key takeaways from this period were:

An abundance of resources existed for families; however, these resources were often underutilized because parents did not have access due a variety of reasons.

Parents, caregivers and adults working with young people did not fully understand the addictive nature of e-cigarette use and were unaware of trends in substance use among youth.

While it is a known fact that parental communication regarding substance use with adolescents has a positive impact in preventing exploration, many parents struggle when it comes to beginning a conversation with their children on this topic. Youth hear messages about substances from media, peers, prevention programs, so parents, too, need to be equipped with the facts to have productive conversations with their youth about both substance use and vaping.

There was a need to provide a variety of programming which could be accessed both in-person and virtually.

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In September of 2023, the Escape the Vape campaign was launched that included programming to address the findings, a coordinated messaging resource for families and school leaders and professional learning opportunities to increase the capacity of adults working with youth throughout Chesterfield County. Programs included:

- **Coffee+Conversation:** an interactive webinar series covering topics such as Live Vape Free, Building Resilience in Children to Prevent Drug Use, and Vaping Trends. These online chats facilitated by the CCPS Family Partnership Specialist featured subject matter experts from Chesterfield Mental Health. These opportunities allowed parents with similar struggles to informally share concerns, seek support, and build community. Feedback from attendees reflects those parents feel "less alone" after participating. Coffee+Conversations are recorded for those who are unable to attend and are available on the CCPS YouTube channel.
- In-person evening presentations titled, "How to Talk to Your Kids about Vaping" were held in the fall for parents to attend with their young people. Led by Barbara Burke, LCSW and co-founder of *Rams in Recovery*, a program offered for students at VCU battling addictions, parents and their children alike had the opportunity to take a deeper dive into e-cigarette usage and substance use trends. Participants gained an understanding of how advertising and social media have contributed to the vaping epidemic, what can be done at various levels of intervention, including treatment and cessation tools. These events gave parents and children the opportunity to get the facts and also build communication skills.
- School-based messaging-School leaders received resources and messaging about vaping that could be shared with their families in order to make sure that parents and caregivers received

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consistent information regardless of their communication preferences. Vaping resources are available on the administrator hub and the Chesterfield County Public Schools website.

- Staff training- In addition to family programming, a PAVE training was organized for all school nurses and county mental health and prevention employees. PAVE or Parents Against Vaping is a nonprofit organization that carries out our educational work with parents and other adults who work with adolescents. They offer information and resources to help adults understand the causes and extent of the youth vaping epidemic, health risks of vaping, and how to recognize the signs and offer support to their own children. On January 23, 2024 and February 7th, a PAVE representative trained 50 school nurses and mental health staff to be point persons for vaping prevention. These school nurses and county staff received PAVE volunteer educator toolkits so that they can now provide training in their buildings and community.
- Screenagers: Under the Influence documentary-The public was invited to view the film Screenagers: Under the Influence. The screening was held on December 12, 2023 at the Chesterfield Career and Technical Center, Hull Street Road location and was followed by a panel discussion that included Sarah Birckhead of the Virginia Department of Health, Barbara Burke, and the school system's mental health support specialists Kiana Copeland and Amanda Whitlow. The film initiated a productive discussion amongst the parents, caregivers, grandparents, and staff who were in attendance.
- School-based anti-vaping programming was spearheaded by several middle school and high school administrators and Parent Teacher Associations. The Office of Family and Community

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Engagement helped connect school leaders to local experts and quality resources to directly support efforts at individual schools.

Program Cost:

Escape the Vape was a free program for all participants. The organization and administration of the program was done through the Office of Family and Community Engagement who worked with the Creative Media Services Team to develop digital promotional materials and share messaging with stakeholders through the weekly Principal's Hub, social media, and weekly newsletters. There was no cost associated with the digital materials or social media. Subject matter experts from Chesterfield Mental Health, VCU and staff from Virginia Department of Health provided their time and expertise free of charge. The following items were the only costs associated with Escape the Vape:

- Rights to the film, Screenagers: Under the Influence, was purchased for \$750.00.
- In addition to the film, copies of the book, *Parenting in the Screen Age*, were purchased for families. The cost was \$200.00.
- Chesterfield Mental Health paid for the PAVE training in which school-division staff were invited to attend. The cost was \$500.00.

Program Results/Success:

The Escape the Vape programming is ongoing. Thus far, Coffee+Conversations has served over 350 parents and caregivers through live chats and recorded YouTube content. These sessions were a direct way to source the needs of parents. Feedback shared through emails and questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive. Many attendees have become regulars and attend the Coffee+Conversation

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chats weekly. One parent recently noted, "It's nice to know that I am not alone in my parenting struggles."

In person programming was attended by 90 parents, caregivers, and youth. From the qualitative feedback, the value of the in-person programming was learning the best way to have productive conversations about substance use and abuse. One parent shared, "I learned that I need to be less authoritative. I need to listen more to my child because I want them to come to me if they are ever tempted to try vaping." Also noted by the feedback was the effectiveness of having a cross generational presentation where both adults and youth learned perspectives from each other.

School based messaging was delivered through Monday Messages that go to 8,700 staff members and Friday Family update that are received by 70,500 family and staff members.

75 CCPS staff members and county staff attended the PAVE Train the Trainer event and scaled the reach of the Escape the Vape messaging.

The Screenagers documentary was attended by 84 people. Presenters, panelists, and families were so engaged that many stayed long after the panel discussion to continue the conversation.

Escape the Vape will continue through the 2024-2025 school year due to the positive feedback received.

Worthiness of an award:

The well-being of our children is a priority for parents, educators, and the community. Mental health and physical health play a crucial role in a child's overall development and ability to achieve. Escape the

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Vape programming and collaborations between Chesterfield Mental health and CCPS will be ongoing as it will always be necessary to stay ahead of drug trends and support the wellness of youth and families in our community.

While this campaign addressed a specific problem of practice, e-cigarette usage among adolescents, the way in which this was done is of note. No one agency, organization, or locality holds the blame or the solution. Often times, our tendency to work within our own agency requires the duplication of efforts and limits our ability to scale- thus preventing us from truly addressing the problem at hand. Our work provided opportunities for parents and caregivers to increase their parental self-efficacy and promoted a shared commitment throughout our community to our youth in regards to substance use.

Supplemental Materials:

- enclosed

Supplemental Materials:



Program Planned: How to talk to your kids about vaping

Join CCPS team members and presenter Barbara Burke to discuss the dangers of vaping and how to talk to kids about it. According to the Virginia Department of Health, more than one in four high school students and one in 10 middle school students reported vaping in the last 30 days. On Sept. 26 and Oct. 12, team members from the Office of Family and Community Engagement will facilitate a discussion and provide helpful resources. The program will help families:

- Gain an understanding of the risks of substance use during adolescence and the young adult years
- Learn about different types of electronic smoking devices and how to recognize them
- Gain information about the health risks and trends in use among young people
- Address myths, trends and concerns about vaping and marijuana use in young people
- Get information and resources needed to address this issue with children early and often

There are two opportunities to attend. Click the links below to learn more and register for this free program.

- [Sept. 26 at CTC @ Hull!](#) (13900 Hull Street Road), 6:30-7:45 p.m.
- [Oct. 12 at Thomas Dale High School](#) – main campus (3626 West Hundred Road), 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Coffee & Conversation set for Dec. 6



[Click here to register for upcoming Coffee & Conversations](#), scheduled through January. The next of these virtual gatherings is titled "Helping Your Child With Self-Regulation" and will take place 1-2 p.m. Dec. 6. Coffee & Conversation is hosted by the Chesterfield County Public Schools Office of Family and Community Engagement.

Families invited to free showing of "Screenagers Under the Influence"



Chesterfield County Public Schools invites parents and teens to a free showing of "Screenagers Under the Influence: Addressing Vaping, Drugs and Alcohol in the Digital Age" at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at CTC@Hull (13900 Hull Street Road). A panel discussion with health specialists will follow the screening. [Get more information and reserve your free tickets here.](#)

"Screenagers Under the Influence: Addressing Vaping, Drugs and Alcohol in the Digital Age" examines the impact of technology on teens' decision-making about vaping, drugs and alcohol. Exploring the latest research and learning more about the personal experiences of teens and families, the film highlights the changing landscape of the substances, offering solutions for how to best empower teens as they face decisions about what they will and will not be influenced by.

The film debunks myths and depicts strategies parents and schools can use to encourage healthy decision-making, support teen mental health, set limits and create healthy home environments. The film also includes many ways young people are using their wisdom and strength to help each other and themselves through this complicated terrain around substance use.