



To: The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

From: Sefanit Mekuria, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer, Public Health Director

Suzanne Tavano, PhD,
Director of Behavioral Health

Re: Staff Report on the Implementation of the Cannabis School-Based Youth Education and Prevention Project to Family and Human Services Committee

Date: September 17, 2025

I. Background

On July 18, 2017, the Board of Supervisors received a report on local policy and regulatory considerations in the wake of voter approved Proposition 64 (Prop 64), which legalized adult recreational use of marijuana.

On April 24, 2018, the Board of Supervisors accepted the staff report from the Department of Conservation and Development and approved the final draft of a framework for regulating cannabis in the unincorporated areas of the County. Staff were directed to prepare a land use ordinance based on the framework and subsequent discussion. Additionally, the Board directed Contra Costa Health to provide a report at the May 8th, 2018, Board meeting, to consider the drafting of a cannabis Health Ordinance for the purpose of further regulating the commercial cannabis industry in the unincorporated areas of the County.

On May 8, 2018, the Board of Supervisors accepted the Contra Costa Health staff report with recommendations for a health ordinance to regulate commercial activity associated with recreational adult use cannabis. It was proposed that the ordinance prohibit the sale of flavored leaf, bud, e-juices or any other product that is designed for smoking or use with electronic smoking devices. This was one of several recommendations made to protect youth from exposure to and use of an emerging line of products, electronic smoking devices (vapes) as well as the flavored tobacco products associated with the use of these devices. There had been a dramatic increase in the use of vaping products by youth attracted to flavored tobacco products, as addressed in Ordinance No. 2017-01, referenced above. The Board directed staff to prepare a cannabis health ordinance for the Board's consideration that among other health protections would include a prohibition on the sale or delivery of flavored cannabis products for which the primary use is to be smoked or used in electronic smoking devices.

On May 24, 2018, Ordinance No. 2018-23 was introduced to require a county health permit for commercial cannabis activities, waived reading, and fixed on August 7, 2018, for adoption. Consistent with the County's tobacco control ordinance, the Commercial Cannabis Health Permit Ordinance prohibits the sale or delivery of flavored cannabis products for which



the primary use is to be smoked or used in electronic smoking devices. Adopting this local health ordinance additionally authorized county staff to inspect, regulate and enforce appropriate state and local laws pertaining to the cannabis industry.

Health Ordinance 2018-24 Summary

The Commercial Cannabis Health Permit Ordinance required all persons engaged in commercial cannabis activities in the unincorporated county to obtain a county health permit in addition to all other licenses and permits required by the County and the State.

The ordinance establishes general health standards that apply to all commercial cannabis activities including standards that specifically pertain to manufacturing (e.g., the use of volatile solvents is prohibited), retail sale (e.g., transaction limits on edible cannabis products, requirements for consumer warnings), and retail delivery (e.g., delivery employees are required to examine government-issued identification cards upon delivery). As mentioned, consistent with the County's tobacco control ordinance, the ordinance would also prohibit the sale or delivery of flavored cannabis products for which the primary use is to be smoked or used in electronic smoking devices.

On June 26, 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted cannabis land use Ordinance Nos. 2018-18 and 2018-19 to regulate commercial cannabis activities and personal cannabis cultivation in the unincorporated county, including requiring land use permits to engage in commercial cannabis activities. In unincorporated Contra Costa County, the number of retail storefronts was limited to four (4) permits and cultivation sites to ten (10) permits. An application and vetting process was set up with a Cannabis Review Panel comprised of staff from Environmental Health, Public Health, Department of Conservation and Development, Department of Agriculture, Contra Costa Consolidated Fire District, County Administrator's Office, and the Department of Conservation and Development. The panel reviewed the applicants' proposals and conducted interviews of the applicants. Recommendations were made to the Board and those selected were then authorized to proceed with the submission of an application to DCD for a land use permit. The ordinance did not limit cannabis delivery operations. As of March 2024, there are four (4) cannabis storefront retailers in operation.

On November 12, 2019, Ordinance No. 2019-34 was introduced and subsequently adopted amending three sections of County code to bring alignment between County Tobacco Control Policy and Cannabis regulation to prohibit as follows:

- (a) The sale of any flavored cannabis product for which the primary use is human inhalation of the gases, particles, vapors, or byproducts released as a result of combustion, electrical ignition, or vaporization of the flavored cannabis product, is prohibited.
- (b) A permittee shall not sell, permit to be sold, offer for sale, or display for sale any cannabis or cannabis product by means of self-service display, vending machine, rack, counter-top, or shelf that allows self-service sales for any cannabis or cannabis product. All cannabis and cannabis products must be offered for sale only by means of permittee or employee Assistance.

(c) The sale of any electronic smoking device that contains tetrahydrocannabinol or any other cannabinoid or can be used to deliver tetrahydrocannabinol or any other cannabinoid in aerosolized or vaporized form, is prohibited. For purposes of this subsection, “electronic smoking device” has the meaning set forth in Section 445-2.006. This subsection does not apply to any device regulated by the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

(d) The sale of any e-liquid that contains tetrahydrocannabinol or any other cannabinoid is prohibited. For purposes of this subsection, “e-liquid” has the meaning set forth in Section 445-2.006. This subsection does not apply to any substance regulated by the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. (Ordinances. 2019-34 § 4, 2018- 23 § 2.)

On January 10, 2023, Ordinance No. 2023-03 was adopted allowing the sale and delivery of non-flavored cannabis vaping products. Contra Costa Health staff were directed to consult with stakeholders to develop a proposed program designed to raise awareness about the dangers of youth cannabis vaping and curtail the illegal market and return to the Board of Supervisors with a recommended program.

Cannabis Awareness & Prevention Project (CAPP) Development and Funding

On February 23, 2023, as requested recommendations for cannabis education programs were presented to the Family and Human Services (FHS) Committee. Contra Costa Health staff presented four (4) different youth cannabis education and prevention pilot program as recommendations. On June 27, 2023, Contra Costa Health staff determined that only one (1) program had the capacity, expertise, and feasibility to advance given the timeframe, TUPE, a school based, highly acclaimed tobacco prevention program was selected.

On June 24, 2023, \$191,821.18 was allocated for Fiscal Year 2022–2023 to expand the TUPE program’s inclusion of cannabis education. Furthermore, on August 13, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved the continuation of the program and extension through June 30, 2026. The approved funding included \$98,419 of unspent funds from Fiscal Year 2023–2024 and \$330,000 in new revenue. This investment now supports the Contra Costa Cannabis Awareness and Prevention Project (CAPP), which continues to advance targeted strategies aimed at reducing youth cannabis use across the County.

Since the approval of the two-year contract by the BOS on August 13, 2024, the Office of Education’s TUPE program has effectively increased student engagement, district participation, and expanded the program. This growth was made possible by the additional funding provided through the contract. Comprehensive TUPE programming expanded to reach approximately 65 to 70 schools this year, while participation in the CAPP program also increased. Of the County’s 18 school districts, 10 participated in CAPP programming, not including those that only referred students to YVAPE.

II. Contra Costa Health Current Efforts

Tobacco Prevention Program (TPP)

TPP provides technical assistance on public policy and education and shares their technical expertise throughout public health department and agencies within the County. In 2019, TPP began providing education on the health impacts of cannabis on adolescents and presented considerations regarding the decline in the perception of harm of cannabis use among youth over time, and the rise in use of vaping devices. Utilizing the Triangulum of Vaping can address the negative health impacts associated with the use of both tobacco and cannabis on youth.

Behavioral Health

Alcohol and Other Drugs Services (AODS) provides an array of services for youth and adults through contracted Community Based Organizations in the County. AODS uses the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to provide a comprehensive approach to Substance Use Prevention through education, youth leadership development, coalition building and public policy with a focus on decreasing adolescent substance use, delaying onset of use, and increasing knowledge about the environmental factors that contribute to substance use.

Although both the Tobacco Prevention Program and AODS have long-standing partnerships with the Contra Costa Office of Education Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) Program for our students, there are no services that specifically address the increased use of cannabis in the schools.

III. County School-Based Cannabis Awareness Prevention Project (CAPP) Update

Following the decision of the BOS, AODS was designated as the lead agency to develop a contract with TUPE. The initial contract covered a one-year period (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). This contract has since been expanded to two years, extending through June 30, 2026, allowing for a longer implementation period and more comprehensive data collection that better reflects the program's positive impact.

In FY 2024-2025, TUPE submitted monthly narrative reports to AODS. The contract [74-678] term is from 9/1/24 through 6/30/26, with a total contract payment limit (CPL) of \$383,642. Between September 2024 and June 2025, the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) invoiced \$87,166.63, representing approximately 23% of the total CPL.

As part of this new two-year contract, Health Services, in partnership with the Office of Education's TUPE Program, has implemented the following program components:



**TUPE SCHOOL-BASED CANNABIS AWARENESS PREVENTION PROJECT (CAPP)
- PROGRAM COMPONENTS -**

1.	Stanford's Smart Talk: Cannabis Prevention & Awareness Curriculum
	TUPE expanded its prevention efforts to include Stanford's Smart Talk curriculum, which complements existing tobacco prevention programs by providing comprehensive cannabis education to students. This curriculum supports educators in delivering age-appropriate lessons that increase awareness of cannabis risks and promote healthy choices.
2.	Cannabis-Specific Alternatives-to-Suspension (YVAPE)
	This model provides supportive alternatives to suspension for students involved in cannabis-related incidents. It includes referrals to the Youth Vaping Alternative Program Education (YVAPE) statewide online and phone intervention—as well as one-on-one Brief Intervention services delivered by trained school staff. Additional restorative justice approaches, such as peer-led Youth Courts, offer further support and accountability.
3.	Youth Development
	Youth development programs are a core component of comprehensive cannabis prevention services that are most strongly linked to the essential factors-school connectedness and Hart's Ladder. TUPE staff are committed to working in partnership with young people on effective prevention efforts. Youth development includes the inclusion of a cannabis-specific work group in our countywide <i>CourAGE</i> Youth Health Coalition, as well as trained peer educators at participating school sites.
4.	Family and Other Stakeholder Engagement
	TUPE engages families and community stakeholders through targeted events, presentations, and resource distribution. These efforts aim to increase awareness about substance use impacts, share available resources, and equip parents and caregivers with tools to support young people effectively.
5.	Staff Professional Development
	The County Office of Education supports ongoing staff development and regional collaboration by participating in local coalitions and national conferences. Staff receive training and lead workshops to enhance their knowledge and skills in cannabis prevention, youth engagement, and alternatives to suspension, strengthening program implementation and community partnerships.

Contra Costa Cannabis Awareness and Prevention Project (CAPP) Activities

The following section summarizes activities completed during this period and as well as implementation highlights and outcomes.

Stanford Smart Talk: Cannabis Prevention & Awareness Curriculum

In FY 2024–25, the Smart Talk curriculum reported significant growth compared to the previous year. This included increased participation in training, broader district involvement, and a higher number of students reached.

The first Smart Talk training of the year was held during the CAPPacity Building Day on February 13, 2025, in partnership with Stanford University's REACH Lab. Of the attendees, 36 opted into the breakout session for Smart Talk. The TUPE Curriculum Specialist led two additional trainings in March and April 2025. This marked a substantial increase in educator participation compared to the 2023–24 school year, which trained 11 teachers. In 2024–25, 36 teachers were trained as Smart Talk instructors.

The Smart Talk curriculum expanded from 223 students across seven (7) districts in 2023–24 to 988 students across eight (8) districts in 2024–25. This growth was supported by follow-up efforts in April and May, ensuring that all sites had the necessary resources to implement the program effectively. Schools such as Golden Gate Community Schools (Brentwood, Pittsburg, and Richmond) began lessons in October 2024, and Marchus School (Special Education) completed its program by April 1, 2025.

Pre and Post Survey results reflected the program's effectiveness:

- **59%** of students reported believing occasional cannabis use was "very harmful" or "somewhat harmful," compared to **49%** pre-program.
- **10%** of students reported occasional use was "not very harmful," down from **13%** pre-program.
- **54%** of post-survey respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" that they want to remain cannabis-free, cut back, or quit.

Table 1. Participating Schools in FY 2024-2025

The following schools participated in the implementation of Smart Talk with a total of 988 students reached:

School	District	# of Students
Antioch High School	Antioch USD	100
Golden Gate Community School	CCCOE	18
Marchus School	CCCOE	15
Knightsen Elementary	Knightsen ESD	26
Foothill Middle School	Mt. Diablo USD	70
Oak Grove Middle School	Mt. Diablo USD	8
Olympic High School	Mt. Diablo USD	300
Iron Horse Middle School	San Ramon Valley USD	97
Korematsu Middle School	West Contra Costa USD	354
Total # of Students		988

Smart Talk's expansion complemented the success of Project ALERT, another evidence-based curriculum. Combined, these two programs successfully reached 2,568 students, demonstrating the efficiency of a comprehensive, classroom-based education.

Cannabis-Specific Alternatives-to-Suspension & YVAPE

In 2023–24, TUPE successfully registered 78 schools to refer students to UC San Diego's YVAPE program. As of December 2024, 76 schools remained actively registered, representing 14 of the County's 18 school districts. While the overall number of participating schools remained relatively consistent, during the 2024–25 school year there was an increased number of students referred and who completed the program. A total of 30 schools referred students to YVAPE during the 2024–25 school year, up from 22 in 2023–2024. This represents 40% of pre-registered schools and 30% of all schools countywide serving students aged 12 and up. A total of 174 students were enrolled in YVAPE in 2024–2025, a significant increase from 99 students in 2023–24.

Chart 1. YVAPE Utilization & Student Enrollment

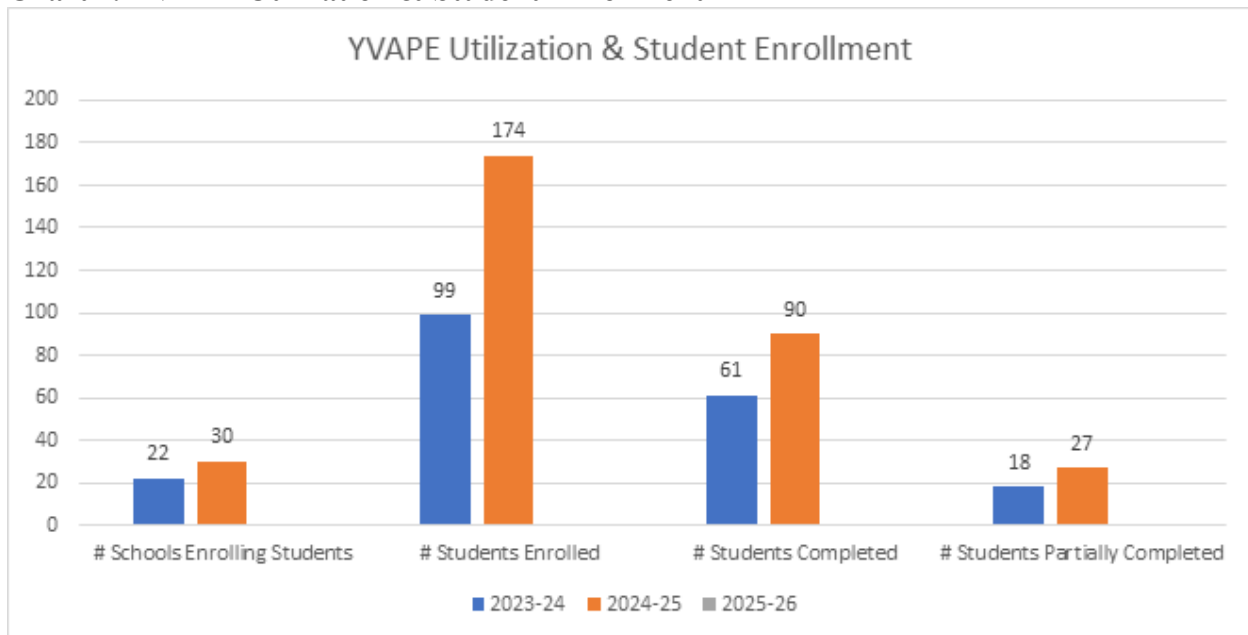


Chart 2. Number of Student Enrolled by Districts/Region

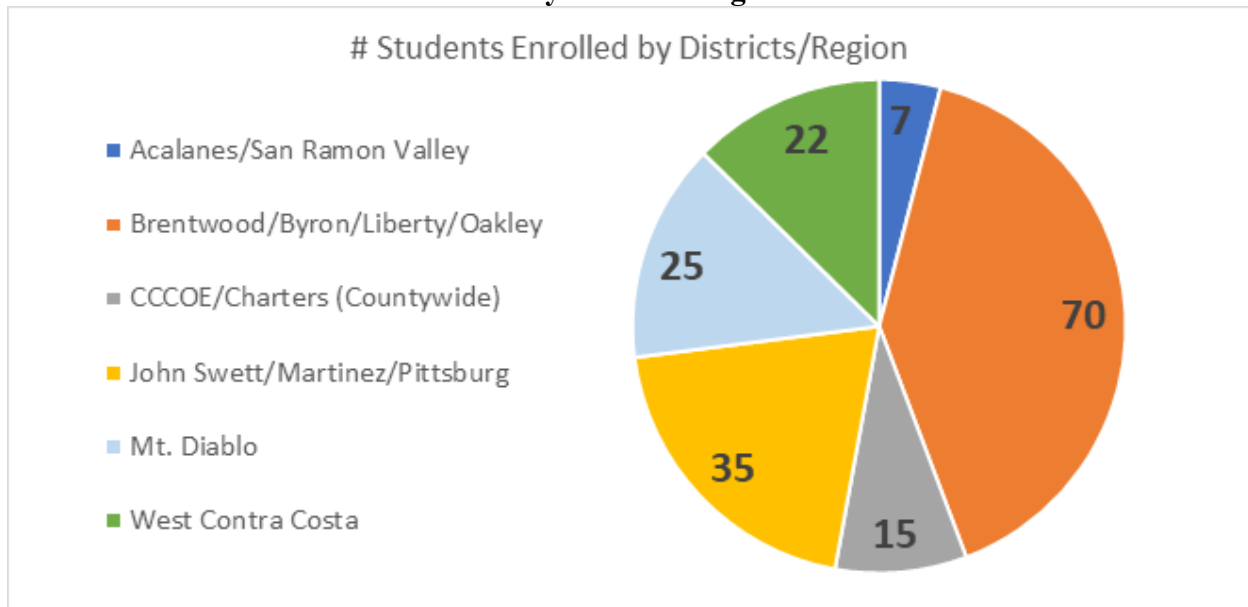
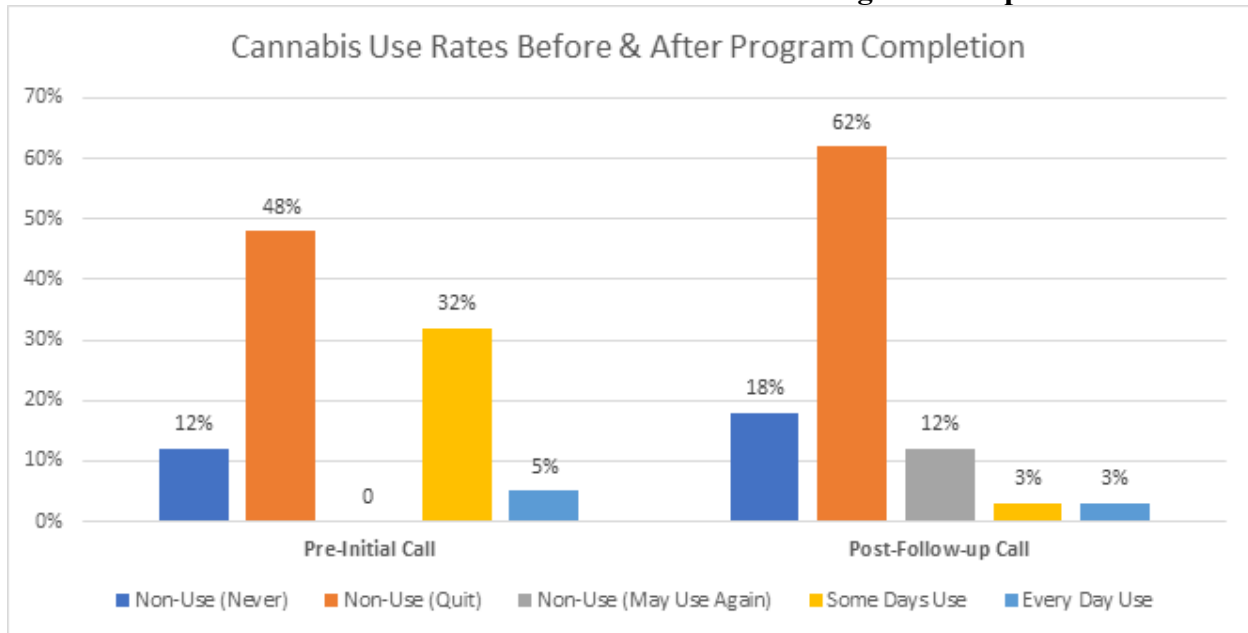


Chart 3. FY 2024-2025 Cannabis Use Rate Before & After Program Completion



In the 2024–25 school year, three students completed Brief Intervention services in response to cannabis-related incidents. This model uses a one-on-one Motivational Interviewing approach facilitated by trained school staff. All three students reported an increase in their knowledge of cannabis, and each indicated they were able to identify both the positive and negative aspects of their substance use. Additionally, all participants discussed and explored alternative coping strategies during their sessions. As a result of this intervention, a total of nine students avoided suspension during the reporting period.

This year marked the first time cannabis-related referrals were made to the Our Healthy Futures program. A total of 14 students avoided suspension through participation in this model. In March 2025, 12 students were referred to and successfully completed the program, followed by two more students who were referred to and completed the program in April 2025. These numbers reflect a growing use of this structured, supportive Alternative to Suspension pathway for youth involved in substance-related school incidents.

Liberty Union High School District launched a peer-led Restorative Youth Court pilot program between January and June 2025. In this model, student panelists with lived experience meet with peers facing disciplinary action, including those involved in cannabis-related offenses. These sessions are designed to provide support, assess student needs, and recommend alternative responses, such as referrals to YVAPE, Our Healthy Futures, or Brief Intervention services. Between February and May, eight students were referred to the Youth Court. Of those, four completed the full process, including three students whose cases involved cannabis or other substances. Three Youth Court sessions during this time period specifically addressed cannabis-related incidents. Liberty Union has trained all site administrators and student panelists and plans to continue the program into the 2025–26 school year. This expansion is especially timely, given

the district's California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data indicating higher than average cannabis use and lower perceptions of harm among 9th graders compared to countywide rates.

Table 2. School District Participation in YVAPE by School Year

District	2023-24 Participation	2024-25 Participation
Acalanes Union HSD	✓	✓
Antioch		✓
Brentwood	✓	✓
Direct-Funded Charters	✓	
John Swett	✓	✓
Knightsen		✓
Lafayette	✓	✓
Liberty Union	✓	✓
Martinez	✓	✓
Mt. Diablo	✓	✓
Oakley	✓	✓
Orinda		✓
Pittsburg	✓	
San Ramon Valley	✓	✓
Walnut Creek		✓
West Contra Costa	✓	✓

Youth Development

In the 2024-25 school year, youth development efforts expanded significantly. Approximately 40 students were accepted as CourAGE Youth Health Coalition members, with nine actively participating in the cannabis/marijuana prevention work group. CourAGE members, along with trained student peer educators from participating schools, helped plan and implement 11 peer-led cannabis prevention activities that reached a total of 1,466 students across the county.

Youth Health Coalition meetings were held monthly, with 25 members attending the May 6, 2025, meeting. The session included an icebreaker, announcements, and a "Choosing Tactics" activity, which helped members strategize how to connect actions with prevention goals. On May 12, the New Members Committee met to review and update interview questions for new youth applicants.

At the March TUPE site coordinator meetings, 19 staff submitted project interest forms, with 16 indicating plans to implement peer-led activities. Follow-up outreach in April ensured they had the resources to move forward. By May 2025, peer educators had reached 707 students through classroom presentations and school-wide activities. In total, 10 schools across five districts implemented peer-led initiatives.

Table 3. Peer-Led Cannabis Prevention Summary (2024-25)

Measure	Count
Total Peer-Led Activities	11
Total Students Reached	1,466
Students Reached in May 2025	707
Participating Schools	10
Participating Districts	5

Table 4. Schools and Peer-Led Activities by School District

School Name	District	Activity Description	Reach
John Swett High School	John Swett	Cannabis 101 lesson in grades 9–11	122
California High School	San Ramon Valley	Cannabis 101 and Vaping 101 lessons for 9th grade health classes	66 total
Dozier-Libbey Medical High School	Antioch	Substance use prevention and self-care project (9th graders)	200
Oak Grove Middle School	Mt. Diablo	TUPE/CAPP table at Open House (peer educators used trivia wheel)	150 families
Valley View Middle School	Mt. Diablo	Cannabis 101 lesson in mixed grade classroom	90
Vicente High School	Martinez	Youth & Cannabis podcast with the CCCP Coalition	79 views
Pleasant Hill Middle School	Mt. Diablo	Cannabis 101 in all science classes	675

Table 5. Post-Survey Results (n = 593)

Survey Question	Response
Learned more about the dangers of marijuana/cannabis	95%
Practiced new or existing resistance/coping skills during the presentation	60%
Want to stay cannabis-free, cut back, or quit after participating	92%

The fact that only 60% of students reported practicing resistance or coping skills during peer-led presentations highlights a gap in engagement. This finding connects to the importance of incorporating more interactive components, which will be addressed through expanded virtual “Admin Team” meetings, district-specific implementation support, and technical assistance to strengthen adoption and referral workflows.

There is also an opportunity to improve the interactive components of peer-led activities. The lower reported rate of skill practice—compared to gains in knowledge and intention to avoid use, may be due to limited time for practice, inconsistent facilitation, or unclear framing of skill-building moments.

Recommended next steps include:

- Ensuring all presentations include structured opportunities for skill practice
- Enhancing peer educator training on delivering interactive content
- Developing a toolkit with ready-to-use skill-building activities

- Refining survey language to help students more clearly recognize and report when they have practiced these skills

Family and Other Stakeholder Engagement

Youth cannabis use is influenced by normalization, low perception of harm, promotion and peer acceptance. Cannabis use has negative health impacts on learning and contributes to early onset psychosis. Despite multilevel efforts to educate young people, vaping continues to rise. According to the 2023 CHKS, 14 percent of 11th graders reported vaping in the past 30 days, which reflects a 3% increase from the previous year. This data trend highlights the importance of strategically aligning proven tobacco control policies with cannabis regulations to protect youth health.

During the 2024-25 program year, cannabis prevention efforts extended to families and caregivers through a series of local engagement events and parent resource distributions. While only one centralized parent-focused event was held last year, in 2024-25 there were multiple District-led Fentanyl Awareness Events and consistent dissemination of resources throughout the year. In total, 344 parent guides on substance use and mental health were distributed, and six community events engaged families across the county.

Several districts hosted Fentanyl Awareness Events in collaboration with CCCOE, thereby creating opportunities for direct family engagement and education on the risks of opioid misuse. These events also incorporated information about how the early onset of cannabis use can be a precursor for the use of other substances. National data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) shows that adolescents who use cannabis are 2 to 3 times more likely to misuse prescription opioids later in life. Locally, TUPE student perception data has also shown that early cannabis use is often linked with lower perceived risk of harm from other drugs, reinforcing the need for early intervention. Although the events were focused on raising awareness about the Opioid Crisis, the majority of families and adults participating in the events voiced concerns about vaping as the most common and alarming trend among students. Parents, educators and adults consistently agreed that the popularity of vaping has accelerated an increased use of drugs/tobacco and alcohol.

Table 6. Parent Guide Distribution & Family Engagement Events (2024–25)

Date	School / School District	Participants	Number of Guides Distributed
Sept 2024	Foothill MS (Mt. Diablo)	65	40
Oct 2024	Diablo View MS (Mt. Diablo)	32	40
Nov 2024	Valley View MS (Mt. Diablo)	57	25
Nov 2024	Fentanyl Awareness Event (Liberty Union)	90	30
Jan 2025	El Dorado MS (Mt. Diablo)	30	20
Feb 2025	Olympic HS (Mt. Diablo)	20	10
Mar 2025	Fentanyl Awareness and Overdose Prev Training (Countywide)	38	19
Apr 2025	CCOE'S Coordinating Council Parent Guide Distribution (Countywide)	N/A	200

While overall distribution numbers were lower than the previous year, this year's efforts were more targeted and district-led, creating localized opportunities for engagement.

Staff Professional Development

The CCCOE supported the registration and attendance of 33 Contra Costa school and community-based organization staff at the Stanford's 6th Annual Teaching Cannabis Awareness & Prevention Virtual Conference, held April 9–10, 2025. This national conference drew over 2,000 attendees from across all 50 states. Registered participants gained access to a wide range of sessions and recorded content focused on youth drug prevention strategies. Topics included lessons for all grade levels, the latest research on cannabis and youth, intersections with tobacco use, equity considerations, evolving policies, and early intervention strategies.

A CCCOE's TUPE/CAPP Curriculum Specialist led multiple sessions on cannabis education in middle schools, high schools, and non-traditional school settings. Workshops included: *Working with Youth in High Using Alternative, Continuation, and Community Day Schools* (121 attendees); *How to Teach About Cannabis and Vaping in Middle Schools* (210 attendees); and *How to Teach About Cannabis and Vaping in High Schools* (247 attendees). The importance of Alternatives to Suspension was also emphasized by Ms. Lynn Mackey, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, who participated in one of the sessions.

CCCOE's continued leadership in developing and sharing effective cannabis prevention strategies through strong partnerships, capacity building, and engagement at the local and national level, demonstrate that they are in fact, well positioned to implement CAPP. Lastly, the CCCOE expanded its role in local cannabis prevention efforts by actively participating in the newly formed Contra Costa Cannabis Prevention Coalition.

CAPP Implementation Challenges

Curriculum Integration Timing

Many educators expressed interest in implementing cannabis prevention curricula, such as the Smart Talk program. However, because most teachers establish their instructional plans at the beginning of the academic year, incorporating new mid-year content proved challenging. As a result, some interested teachers were unable to implement the curriculum during the 2024–25 school year. To support broader adoption, cannabis prevention resources will instead be promoted consistent with district planning timelines for the 2025–26 school year.

Incomplete Program Reporting

There is evidence that the number of students reached through the curriculum is higher than reported. Several teachers are known to have delivered the curriculum without submitting all of their data, resulting in underreported outcomes. This gap in reporting highlights a need for improved communication, training, and tracking systems, which will be addressed in the 2025–26 school year to ensure that we capture more accurate and comprehensive data.

Variation in District-Level Implementation of Alternative to Suspension Programs

While training and technical assistance are offered to support the use of programs such as the UC San Diego's YVAPE Alternative to Suspension model, decisions regarding program adoption and

implementation rest with individual districts. This variation in decision-making has resulted in inconsistent use of available support. To help address this barrier, virtual “Administration Team” meetings have been established to discuss site-specific needs and support implementation across districts

Contract Delay

Due to technical issues, the contract started in September 2024, which delayed implementation timelines. However, such delays are not anticipated this year, and the contract is expected to begin on schedule.

IV. Next Steps

- Schedule classroom-based prevention program, one-on-one intervention, and small group intervention trainings within their countywide professional development calendar for the 2025-26 school year.
- Outreach plan to engage the remaining 25% of schools eligible to refer students to YVAPE, who have not yet completed the registration process. Also plan to monitor ongoing updates for identified referring administrators, through communication and administrator training and ongoing support.
- Continue collaborative partnership with Stanford’s REACH Lab, which only strengthens this new project, particularly the Smart Talk (classroom-based prevention) and Healthy Futures (small group intervention) program implementation.
- While CCCOE staff are hopeful that the pre- and post-survey data process built into Stanford’s Smart Talk curriculum will be an effective way to gather future student data, given the challenges they faced this year with accessing disaggregated data, CCCOE TUPE would create and manage their own data collection and analysis tools.

V. Staff Recommendations

- ACCEPT the Report from Contra Costa Health (CCH) with updates on the implementation of TUPE’s cannabis school-based education program and baseline outcomes for Fiscal Year 24-25.
- CONTINUE funding beyond June 30, 2026 to support the gains made during Fiscal Year 24-25 to maximize its impact and sustain momentum toward long-term goals; especially at a time when vaping and cannabis use continue to rise. Over the course of the contract, significant progress has been made in building infrastructure, developing partnerships, and implementing key strategies. Maintain same funding level for subsequent years, beyond June 30, 2026.
- CONSIDER the ever-evolving nature of substance use particularly among youth as they grow into healthy and independent young adults. Further identify intersections



between vaping and effective tobacco control policies while taking into consideration equity, data and outcomes.

Appendix A

Tobacco Use Education Prevention (TUPE) Programming Framework

The Contra Costa Office of Education's Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) program is committed to promoting tobacco-free lifestyles among youth and providing resources to prevent and reduce tobacco use. Through a comprehensive approach, the TUPE program offers various services and initiatives aimed at empowering students, educators, and communities to make informed choices regarding tobacco use. Below is an overview of the frameworks used by the program:

1. The Social-Ecological Model

TUPE, just as Contra Costa Health, uses a five-level social-ecological model to assess how environmental and interpersonal factors can encourage or deter tobacco use and vaping among youth. Each level of the model described below identifies a point of influence and a potential opportunity for intervention.

- a. The **"Individual"** level examines the influence of factors such as attitudes and knowledge.
- b. The **"Interpersonal"** level examines the role of peers, family, partners, and mentors.
- c. The **"School"** and **"Community"** levels explore how behavior is impacted by teachers and the social and physical characteristics of institutions, environmental settings, media, and advertising.
- d. The **"Policy"** level looks at the broader implications of laws, rules, and enforcement measures.

The model provides a useful framework to assist TUPE programs and community partners in determining how to focus strategies and resources.

2. Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)

TUPE uses the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to provide a comprehensive approach to guide TUPE prevention programs using a five-step model for continuous improvement and effective programming. Core components include the following:

- a. **Assessment:** Identify local prevention needs based on data
- b. **Capacity:** Build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs
- c. **Planning:** Find out what works to address prevention needs and how to implement strategies effectively, then create a plan of action
- d. **Implementation:** Deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended
- e. **Evaluation:** Examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices

3. Connectedness and Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation

Prevention programs are successful when students feel connected to their school and prevention programs can also directly support young people's feeling of connectedness, particularly through intentional and positive youth development program strategies. Students who feel connected to school are more likely to have positive health and academic outcomes. Crucial to that connection is the development of trusting and meaningful



relationships on campus. Four essential factors crucial to strengthening school connectedness for students include:

1. Adult support
2. Belonging to a positive peer group
3. Commitment to education
4. A positive school environment

Hart's Ladder is a visual illustration of the importance and value of youth participation in prevention programs. The highest rung on the ladder involves youth-initiated projects where youth and adult allies share equal levels of decision making. This ladder challenges educators to move away from the lower rungs of non-participation (youth as decoration, tokenizing youth, or assigning/informing youth) to the higher rungs in which young people are genuinely engaged as partners.

Meaningful youth engagement is vital in creating safe, supportive, and healthy school environments that lead to better peer to peer connections, student to adult relationships, and overall school connectedness.

Appendix B

Tobacco Use Education Prevention (TUPE) Services Provided

The Contra Costa Office of Education's Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) program is committed to promoting tobacco-free lifestyles among youth and providing resources to prevent and reduce tobacco use. Through a comprehensive approach, the TUPE program offers various services and initiatives aimed at empowering students, educators, and communities to make informed choices regarding tobacco use. Below is an overview of the services provided by the program:

1. Project ALERT

Prevention programs include Project ALERT, a research-validated classroom-based substance use prevention program implemented in middle schools, and Stanford's You & Me, Together Vape-Free program, which TUPE implements with non-traditional schools. Non-traditional schools include continuation schools, alternative schools, independent study, etc.

Project ALERT motivates students against drug use, cultivates new non-use attitudes and beliefs, and equips teens with the skills and strategies they will use to resist drugs. The content and instructional strategies are grounded in research on effective health education. 11-lesson curriculum (grade 7) & 3 booster lessons (grade 8).

The Project ALERT Core Curriculum is organized into four parts. The lessons build on each other and are taught in consecutive order.

The concepts stressed in each lesson are:

- Motivating nonuse.
- Identifying pressures to use drugs, learning to resist those pressures, and practicing resistance skills.
- Review of key concepts and resistance skills practice.
- Newest content: Prescription Opioids and Heroin (Lesson 8); Smoking and Vaping Cessation.

2. You & Me, Together Vape-Free Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit:

You & Me, Together Vape-Free addresses key factors associated with youth e-cigarette use, including changing adolescents' attitudes towards and misperceptions about e-cigarettes; increasing refusal skills, marketing, and social media; reducing stress and depression; improving coping; and decreasing intentions and actual use of all e-cigarette products.

The You and Me, Together Vape-Free curriculum includes 6 lessons that address key factors associated with youth e-cigarette use, including changing adolescents' attitudes towards and misperceptions about e-cigarettes; increasing their refusal skills to pulls of

flavors, marketing, and social media; reducing stress and depression which have been linked to e-cigarette initiation and use; improving coping; and decreasing intentions and actual use of all e-cigarette products. Lesson 6 addresses the intersections of tobacco and cannabis use.

Goals:

1. Increase their knowledge about e-cigarettes and the harms they can cause.
2. Gain awareness of strategies manufacturers and sellers of e-cigarettes employ to increase use among adolescents, such as deceptive and creative marketing strategies.
3. Gain skills to refuse experimentation and use of e-cigarettes.
4. Ultimately, to reduce and prevent e-cigarette use of any type, including nicotine, cannabis/THC, and/or non-nicotine products.

All TUPE schools implement school-wide activities or events. Activities, ideally led or co-led by trained student peer educators, includes school-wide audio and video announcements, lunchtime tabling, and pledge campaigns. CCCOE TUPE staff encourage schools to leverage existing, nationally recognized events, such as Great American Smokeout and Take Down Tobacco to plan and implement activities with the goal of raising awareness of the dangers of tobacco use among students and staff. Many schools also incorporate TUPE messaging and activities into existing events that already engage much of their school community, such as Open House, music or theater performances, athletic games, etc. to reach a broader audience. CCCOE TUPE provides sites with the necessary information, resources, and materials to implement these activities.

One of the strongest components of local TUPE programs are TUPE peer educators. The primary role of our Peer Educators is to provide tobacco-prevention information, resources, and support to their peers, as well as inspire all members of the school community by modeling healthy choices and leadership.

CCCOE TUPE trains hundreds of students from middle schools, high schools, and non-traditional (continuation) schools as TUPE Peer Educators each year. Peer Educators then go on deliver anti-tobacco messages at their school, primarily through classroom presentations and school-wide events.

The goals of all Peer Educators are to:

- Teach new information about tobacco/e-cigarettes.
- Encourage non-tobacco users to stay tobacco free.
- Encourage current tobacco users to cut back or quit by sharing resources.
- Have fun!

In addition to TUPE peer educators, CCCOE TUPE staff co-coordinate the Contra Costa CourAGE Youth Health Coalition. Established in 2013, CourAGE is a youth-directed group that plays a leadership role in addressing health-related issues. Members develop skills that empower them to create healthy environments through awareness and advocacy projects. The 35 members are in grades 8-12 and represent communities across our county.

Past and current CourAGE projects include:

- Countywide tobacco prevention video PSA Contest & Film Festival
- Student-led Youth Symposium
- Teens Tackle Tobacco conference workshops
- Supporting community-based events
- Presenting to local decision-makers
- Speaking at countywide Family & Community Engagement webinars

3. Alternative to Suspensions and Support for Youth with Nicotine Addiction:

To support students struggling with tobacco use, TUPE programs include an alternative-to-suspension model with multi-tiered approaches intervention. These approaches include referral, small group, and one-on-one support, as well as referrals to voluntary quit/cessation support through Contra Costa 211 and Kick It California.

4. YVAPE

YVAPE, run by UC San Diego (Kick It California) is the referral option and is a free educational program with phone coaching support for students who have been caught with tobacco or cannabis at school. YVAPE is available to California public middle and high schools who will enroll students instead of alternative disciplinary action for vaping. YVAPE is designed to provide a positive experience for the student and help them think through their vaping behavior. The program is now available for students aged 12 and up. Referred students receive an initial call from a trained YVAPE coach and talk with them for 15-20 minutes and set up a time for a follow-up call. Between the initial and follow-up call, students watch the YVAPE videos. They are encouraged to watch the videos with their parent/guardian and discuss the questions with them. Video topics include vaping industry marketing manipulation, vaping health effects, vaping marijuana, understanding motivation, and personal responsibility. During the 10–15-minute follow-up call, the student talks with the YVAPE coach about the videos and can ask questions. Lastly, students complete a short online follow-up survey and then receive a certificate of completion.

5. Our Healthy Futures Program Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit:

Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit's Our Healthy Futures program is geared for students who have been caught using e-cigarettes and/or for any students who are interested in trying to quit. Our Healthy Futures is to be taught by an educator, counselor, advisor, or another adult in a small group setting. The program can be implemented in one 2-hour session, or over multiple sessions. The program allows for warm-up questions interspersed between slides that allow students to share what they know about each topic.

The learning objectives for the 2-hour curriculum are:

- Describe the health problems associated with e-cigarettes/vape pens.
- Develop and individualized plan for setting goals related to their e-cigarette/vape pen use.
- Access resources to quit e-cigarettes/vape pens.

Brief 1-1 Interventions:

Brief Intervention is the one-on-one program option. For the purposes of TUPE, the program is utilizing to address tobacco use, however, the program is appropriate to address any substance use. Brief Intervention for Substance Using Adolescents (BI) is a short-term, one-on-one intervention that consists of two to four (2-4) 45–60-minute sessions aimed at adolescents who use tobacco or those most at risk for tobacco use. BI uses motivational interviewing, cognitive behavior therapy, and the stages of change model to meet the needs of adolescents. BI is also available for students to self-refer. Whenever possible, BI providers implement the optional parent/guardian session.

Brief Intervention provides young people with:

- A forum to talk about their tobacco use,
- Accurate information about tobacco, including e-cigarettes/vape pens,
- Support in identifying tobacco use related issues that impact them,
- Goal setting support, and
- Assistance in accessing other services, if needed.

Rounding out comprehensive programs are professional development for TUPE and non-TUPE staff, including the latest on vaping and teens, as well as trainings on specific program strategies, including curriculum, intervention programs, and youth development/engagement. Family and community engagement is done at the county, district, and site-level. CCCOE TUPE holds an annual countywide webinar on the latest on vaping and teens and tips for parents and other caring adults. District- and site-level family engagement includes newsletters, tabling at events, and presentations.

For students who want to cut back or quit, TUPE would continue to refer young people to Contra Costa Health's Behavioral Health Division, Alcohol & Other Drug Services (AODS) program, so that they can be connected to appropriate treatment services.