



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 16, 2018

Contact: Kelsy Been, RFSD Public Information Officer
970-456-1370
kelsybeen@rfschools.com

Roaring Fork Schools team up with public health on vaping education campaign

The Roaring Fork Schools are teaming up with Pitkin, Eagle, and Garfield counties' public health departments to raise awareness about the harmful effects of vaping nicotine on youth. This effort is in response to the dramatic increase in youth vaping in Colorado and across the country, which has created new challenges for schools and communities alike.

Colorado youth are vaping nicotine at twice the national average, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The governor's office declared Colorado's first ever "No Vape November" earlier this month.

"Vaping is highly concerning for us because the incidence has skyrocketed in the past few years among youth, whereas their perceptions of harm from vaping remain low," said Roaring Fork Schools Superintendent Rob Stein. "Ads tout vaping as a healthy alternative to smoking, which is misleading and irresponsible."

According to the 2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 53% of high school students in the Roaring Fork Schools reported that they have tried vaping nicotine, and 37% reported that they have vaped nicotine in the past 30 days--up from 21% in 2015.

"Nicotine has a negative effect on adolescent brain development, causing lasting cognitive and behavioral impairments," said Risa Turetsky, Pitkin County Public Health's Tobacco Specialist. "And more than 90% of vaping products, when tested, contain nicotine--usually a lot of nicotine. The amount of nicotine in one Juul 'pod' or cartridge--the main vape device used by youth--has the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes."

Yet, survey results show that a majority of student survey respondents don't consider vaping to be harmful but they do find it relatively easy to get, even though it is illegal to purchase as minors.

Glenwood Office
Office
1405 Grand Avenue
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Roaring Fork School District
(Phone) 970.384.6000 (Fax) 970.384.6005
www.rfschools.com

Carbondale
400 Sopris Avenue
Carbondale, CO 81623



At the beginning of this school year, Stein assembled a task force to raise awareness and educate the general public about vaping.

“We are taking vaping very seriously in our schools and, at the same time, we have learned from other public health threats that it takes time to change behaviors and knee-jerk reactions don't work. We are working with public health officials, law enforcement officers, and elected representatives to develop a comprehensive response to vaping,” Stein explained.

In addition to educating the community about the harmful effects of youth vaping, the Roaring Fork Schools’ comprehensive response includes building positive self-regulation behaviors.

“Our greatest opportunity is to teach our students and community how to self-regulate in ways that are healthy and constructive rather than risky and self-destructive,” said Sonja Hendrickson-Linman, the district’s Lead Prevention Specialist. “Creating a toolbox of skills can help all of us navigate the challenges we face.”

The education campaign targets parents, staff, and the broader community. The Roaring Fork Schools will be sharing information with parents of students in 5th-12th grades in November. Then, the district’s prevention specialists will be hosting vaping sessions in the spring. District staff will have access to an online vaping 101 module. Meanwhile, public health will be raising awareness through banners on RFTA buses.

###

Glenwood Office
Office
1405 Grand Avenue
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Roaring Fork School District
(Phone) 970.384.6000 (Fax) 970.384.6005
www.rfschools.com

Carbondale
400 Sopris Avenue
Carbondale, CO 81623