



NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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RESOLUTION 26-003

A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT (NWABSD) IN SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM AND POLICY

WHEREAS, the Northwest Arctic Borough School District supports the mission of the Statewide Coalition of Breathe Free Alaska: *To improve public health by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosols; prevent youth smoking and use of tobacco, nicotine, and electronic smoking devices; and reduce nicotine addiction through the utilization of evidence-based practices.*

WHEREAS, the Northwest Arctic Borough School District serves this community, Northwest Arctic Borough, in this capacity, of public education.

Human and Economic Toll of Tobacco in Alaska

WHEREAS, tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death in Alaska causing 600 deaths each year;¹ and

WHEREAS, tobacco use causes serious health consequences, including heart disease, lung disease, and cancer;² and

WHEREAS, smoking is estimated to cost Alaska \$438 million in health care costs, \$192 million in Medicaid costs, and \$400 million in lost productivity each year;³ and

WHEREAS, tobacco companies spend an estimated \$16.4 million annually on advertising and marketing campaigns in Alaska;⁴ and

Health Harms from Tobacco Product Use & Exposure

WHEREAS, secondhand tobacco smoke exposure is another leading cause of preventable death and causes disease in healthy nonsmokers, including heart disease, stroke, lung disease, and cancer;⁵ and

WHEREAS, among people with behavioral health conditions increases chances for greater depression symptoms, psychiatric hospitalization, suicidal behavior, and drug and alcohol relapse. Smoking can interfere with psychiatric medications, resulting in the need for higher medication doses to achieve the same therapeutic benefit;⁶

Impact on Youth & Young Adults

WHEREAS, youth e-cigarette use in Alaska remains a very serious health concern. Almost 1 in 5 (17%) Alaska teens currently vape and over 1 out of 3 (38%) Alaska teens have ever tried vaping;⁷ and

WHEREAS, e-cigarettes can vary in the amount of nicotine present, they often contain nicotine at much higher levels than cigarettes, and nicotine exposure during adolescence and young adulthood can affect the developing brain and may have lasting effects on cognitive function, decision-making, and impulse control;⁸ and

WHEREAS, e-cigarettes are not FDA-approved as therapeutic cessation products and any promotion or claim to be a cessation product is against federal law;⁹ and

MISSION: To provide a learning environment that inspires and challenges students and employees to excel.

VISION: To graduate all students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a successful future.

WHEREAS, the tobacco industry strategically targets young people through various marketing tactics, including price promotions, appealing flavors and products designed for discreet use (like snus and dissolvable tobacco products;⁸ and

WHEREAS, over 85% of middle and high school students who use nicotine pouches reported using those which are flavored. The top nicotine pouch flavors are mint, fruit and menthol, with over 19% of youth nicotine pouch users reporting menthol flavored nicotine pouch use;¹⁰

WHEREAS, flavored tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco, are specifically designed to appeal to youth and young adults, contributing to the initiation of tobacco use and addiction among vulnerable populations, with studies showing that flavored e-cigarettes are a key factor in the rise of youth vaping in the United States;⁸ and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of tobacco use starts before age 21, and the State of Alaska cannot cite retailers for violations of the federal age 21 for sale of tobacco without a conforming change in Alaska state statute; and

WHEREAS, penalizing children has not been proven to be an effective strategy for reducing youth smoking, and these penalties inappropriately shift the blame away from the tobacco industry and retailers to youth;¹⁰ and

Alaska Priority Populations

WHEREAS, tobacco use is significantly higher across key demographics, including pregnant women, Alaska Native people, youth, people with lower incomes, and people with a mental or behavioral health condition, which contributes to disparities in health outcomes and challenges in public health interventions;⁷ and

Effective Policy Interventions

WHEREAS, sales restrictions on flavored products in the United States have been shown to reduce (1) sales of tobacco products, (2) the odds of youth trying flavored tobacco products, (3) the odds of youth ever using tobacco products, and (4) youth current use of tobacco products, particularly when the restrictions apply to all flavors in all tobacco products;¹² and

WHEREAS, raising tobacco taxes has been shown to reduce smoking rates, discourage smoking initiation, encourage cessation among current smokers, and prevent tobacco-related diseases, ultimately leading to long-term public health benefits;¹³ and

WHEREAS, taxation of e-cigarettes at an equivalent rate to cigarettes is consistent with the evidence-based tobacco control, which aims to reduce the consumption of products that harm health, and has been shown to be a key measure in reducing tobacco use, preventing initiation, and supporting cessation efforts;¹³ and

WHEREAS, funding for Alaska's comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Control program is essential to ensure that local communities have access to effective educational resources, outreach initiatives, and prevention and cessation efforts that can directly address Alaska's different population groups, especially those who are at higher risk of tobacco and nicotine addiction;¹⁴ and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Tobacco Quitline is available to Alaskans as part of the comprehensive program, providing FDA-approved cessation products and counseling support; and

WHEREAS, maintaining and strengthening Alaska’s Clean Indoor Air laws will continue to protect vulnerable populations, enhance the quality of life for all Alaskans, and promote a healthier, smoke-free environment in public places, workplaces, and indoor areas; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwest Arctic Borough School District recommends that the State of Alaska prioritize evidence-based policies to reduce the harmful health impacts of tobacco, including the following policy interventions:

- Protect and increase funding for comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
- Institute and regularly increase significant and comparable taxes on tobacco (including nicotine, synthetic nicotine products and e-cigarettes) to discourage youth initiation
- Direct tobacco tax revenues to support comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation
- Defend and strengthen Alaska’s Clean Indoor Air laws
- Work to restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco products
- Support efforts to restrict sales of all tobacco products to minors

ADOPTED, April 28, 2026, at a duly convened special meeting of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District Board of Education, a quorum was present and voted.

ATTEST:

Margaret Hansen,
President, NWABSD Board of Education

Tillie Ticket,
Secretary, NWABSD Board of Education

References:

- ¹ Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Health Analytics and Vital Records Section. (2023). *Incidence of cancers associated with screening and modifiable risk factors*. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. https://health.alaska.gov/media/gvthahu3/acr-screening-report_20230207.pdf
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 28). *Health effects of cigarette smoking*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/index.htm
- ³ Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. (2023). *Tobacco prevention and control annual report: Fiscal year 2023*. Alaska Department of Health. <https://health.alaska.gov/media/z2wdeyd4/tobaccoarfy23.pdf>
- ⁴ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (2025). *The toll of tobacco in Alaska*. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/alaska>
- ⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, January 31). *Health problems caused by secondhand smoke*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand-smoke/health.html>
- ⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Implementing tobacco cessation treatment for individuals with serious mental illness: A quick guide for program directors and clinicians*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/implementing-tobacco-cessation-treatment-individuals-serious-mental-illness/pep20-06-01-001>
- ⁷ Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. (2024). *Alaska tobacco facts 2024*. https://health.alaska.gov/media/iwcf2znh/2024_aktobaccofacts.pdf
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: A report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/tobacco/sgr/e-cigarettes/index.htm
- ⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 15). *Vaping and quitting*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/quitting.html>
- ¹⁰ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (2018). *Youth purchase and possession laws are not proven to reduce tobacco use*. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/us-resources/fact-sheet/youth-purchase-and-possession-laws-are-not-proven-to-reduce-tobacco-use>
- ¹¹ Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. (2023). *Alaska tobacco facts 2023*. <https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/TobaccoPrevention/Pages/default.aspx>
- ¹² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024). *Eliminating tobacco-related disease and death: Addressing disparities: A report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic

Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/disparities/index.htm>

¹³ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (2024). *Increasing tobacco prices reduces teen smoking (and the tobacco industry knows it)*. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/us/state-tobacco-taxes>

¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 15). *Evidence-based guides for states*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/state-and-community-work/guides-for-states.html>

