Dear Parents/Caretakers:

I am reaching out to you to share my concerns regarding the growing problem of vaping among students across our school district and across the country. This letter is intended to keep you informed regarding the steps we are taking to address this issue, consequences associated with nicotine/vaping infractions, and offer resources and supports for your family if you believe your child may be vaping or using other products containing nicotine. As a school system, this issue is taken seriously, as is the negative impact that vaping and the use of nicotine products has on the health and well-being of our students.

On October 1, 2018, a new law was passed in Maryland which made the sale and possession of e-cigarettes illegal for anyone under the age of 18. You may access the new law via this link: Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law § 10-108(c) (2018). As a result of this new law, Queen Anne’s County Public Schools (QACPS) has revised our Student Discipline Code. QACPS will work closely with law enforcement when a student violates the QACPS Student Discipline policy regarding use and possession of tobacco products, cigarette rolling paper, or an electronic nicotine delivery system (vape/JUUL). Infractions to this policy will include imposing a mandated school based nicotine education program. School administration will also make an immediate report to the School Resource Officer (SRO) who will then issue a civil citation to the student in accordance with the new law. The amount of the citation is $50. For continuous non-compliance, the school may impose a more serious consequence.

QACPS will impose consequences and involve law enforcement (SRO) when students are found to be in possession or use of a vape/JUUL. We acknowledge that some students may have developed a dependence on nicotine. One goal of the nicotine education program is to help students learn healthy habits; free from dependence on nicotine. The Surgeon General has stated that “Nicotine exposure during adolescence and young adulthood can cause addiction and harm the developing brain.” The Surgeon General also cautions that the “use of nicotine can impact learning and concentration.” Through a grant from the Local Management Board, QACPS has hired a full-time Substance Use Counselor, Mrs. Katherine Wright, who will meet with students in need of help. Mrs. Wright has many years of expertise in the area of substance use and addiction. She is a valuable resource for QACPS and our school community. Mrs. Wright can be reached at 410-758-2403 x237 or Katherine.Wright@qacps.org should you need to contact her.
Thank you in advance for collaborating with QACPS as we work to support our students in making positive decisions about their health and well-being that may serve them well into adulthood. For further questions regarding our substance use regulation, QACPS Student Discipline Policy or school based behavioral health issues, please feel free to contact Mr. Brad Engel, Supervisor of Student Support Services at 410-758-8216 or Brad.Engel@qacps.org.

Sincerely,

Andrea M. Kane, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools