

# Vaping – bad or worse?

Takes straight from the Teen Advisory Board survey

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Nearly 300 Jefferson County teenagers expressed an array of opinions about vaping in an online survey created by the Leader Teen Advisory Board, but there were a couple of common themes.

Vaping is widespread among local high-school students, mostly using products sold by JUUL, and more could and should be done to stop the epidemic.

“It is everywhere,” one teen commented in the anonymous survey, continuing ominously, “You think your kid hasn’t tried it . . . Even the good kids make very bad decisions.”

The 10-question survey was made available to students at about 10 Jefferson County high schools represented by the Teen Advisory Board. Some 292 students responded.

The majority of students chose to remain anonymous, but 40 of them indicated they were willing to be interviewed and gave their names.

Here are some of those responses:

Angelica Sprous said others she knows who Juul say they do it to relieve stress, but she said she doesn’t “see the point” of vaping. “There are other alternatives.”

Cayden McGuire said Juul products are designed to be attractive to young people.

“I think (the products) mostly (are) targeted toward young adults with their sleek look. They just fell into the wrong

hands (younger teens).”

Eli Smith said he would tell teenagers who Juul, “Don’t do it. It’s not cool. It’s not healthy for you.”

In addition to using JUUL to relieve stress, anonymous responders gave several reasons for vaping’s appeal – it provides a way to connect with friends, some teenagers think it is fun to try new flavors, and the activity itself can be appealing, for example, some like the smoke clouds that vaping can produce.

Below are the survey questions and a sampling of the anonymous responses:

■ How often do you vape/Juul?

– 70 percent of responders said they had never used Juul, while 13 percent said they used it more than once a day.

■ If you use JUUL, are your parents aware of it?

– 18 percent of users claimed their parents don’t know they use Juul and 12 percent claimed their parents do know.

■ How old were you when you first tried JUUL?

– The responses showed the average ages for the use of Juul is around 15, 16, and 17 years of age.

■ What do you think the main appeal is for vaping/juuling?

– Most students claimed the appeal was that Juul is a way to connect with friends.

■ Do you think you are/would be capable of quitting electronic cigarette usage?

– Of the students that do smoke Juul, the majority claimed they could

## Top 5 reasons teens use a vape

1. To connect with friends
2. To use a nicotine product that is safer than cigarettes
3. To help stop smoking cigarettes
4. To try something new
5. To enjoy different flavors

Source: Leader TAB survey

quit their usage.

■ I have information about any health risks associated with vaping/juuling.

– 71 percent of responders claimed they do have information while 21 percent claimed they lacked health risk information.

■ I know where to find help if I want to stop using vapes.

–76 percent of responders claimed they do know where to find help while 24 percent claimed they did not.

■ Do you think your school is preventing JUUL and other electronic cigarette use on campus?

– 56 percent of students claimed their school was lacking in enforcement of a tobacco free policy.

■ What could your school do differently to prevent JUUL use on campus?

– “I think they could try more locker, bookbag, and locker room checks, and also pay more attention to their students in class. There have been multiple cases of students vaping openly in class, and the teacher either didn’t witness or acknowledge the situation at all.”

– “Introduce real stories of how teens have been negatively affected by Juuls.”

– “Our school has anti-vape posters in the bathroom, and regularly advocates not using Juul or other e-cigarette products. I believe that there is nothing more to do, if students want to use, they will use. Other than explaining health risks and taking them away, there is nothing left unless you infringe on their constitutional rights.”

■ Do you think companies are targeting teens with social media advertising?

– 66 percent of students claimed that companies are targeting teens.

■ What would you like to tell adults about vaping/juuling?

– “I would like to tell them that any type of smoking is bad for your heart and for the parents that are juuling/vaping they are just influencing their kids to do this stuff.”

– “It’s far more addicting than a lot of nicotine products. And your child’s “flash drive” is probably not a flash drive.”

– “More kids than you think vape/juul. It is important to educate yourself and others about its dangers.

“It has become the new ‘teens smoking cigarettes.’ Do what you can to not let this become the new normal.”

## IN OUR OPINION

# Is there a target on our backs?

Vape companies appear more concerned about dollars than teens

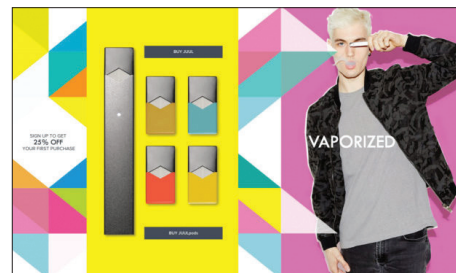
By Haley Worth  
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There is a worldwide conversation about teen vaping, with vaping devices taking over our schools and in the hands of our children.

Teens see all kinds of advertisements telling them not to vape but are also bombarded with inducements to draw them in.

For example, JUUL had an Instagram account that anybody could look at. Since Instagram is widely used by teens, it’s easy to conclude the company knew what it was doing when it placed colorful vaping ads there that would be attractive to a young audience.

Also, JUUL makes pod flavors that are arguably targeted for the younger generation – including mint, mango, cucumber, fruit and creme, among others. And JUUL is not alone.



Online marketing for the popular JUUL brand from 2015.

Several other companies make and sell vape juice that comes in a variety of appealing flavors – from blueberry and grape to pink lemonade and CBD.

If you’ve tasted a food or drink, most likely there is a vape juice to match.

Besides flavors, the styles of vape devices have also changed, becoming ever more attractive to young users.

Today’s devices are small and easy to hide. Parents and teachers could mistake

them for flash drives.

New products also produce less smoke, ideal for a minor intent on hiding his or her vape habit.

In addition to JUUL, vaping products are being offered by SMOK Infinix, SMOKTech stick, Suorin Air, RUBI, Vapour2, Mojo, Blu, MYLE, FIT, and many more – all of which can be used with flavorful juice.

JUUL received negative backlash for allegedly using juvenile flavors to target younger generations, and has made changes.

The company has taken down its Instagram account, made age restrictions on its website, and designed advertisements to warn away anyone under the age of 18.

However, the “Truth Initiative Study,” published in “Tobacco Control,” found that teens are 16 times more likely to use JUUL than older generations.

If teens are the main consumers of this product, eliminating opportunity for minors to use it would obviously decrease how much money the companies make. There is great incentive to keep drawing the attention of young vapers.

JUUL officials say their original plan was to market JUUL to adults who wanted to quit smoking, but once JUUL became popular with teens, the company’s tactics changed. Soon, everyone was talking about JUUL, and this, in itself, could be a marketing goal.

We see the efforts made to stop teens from vaping, but do these companies really want to make a difference?

With that being said, a ban on a JUUL wouldn’t stop teens from vaping.

Other companies are paying attention to JUUL’s popularity and are using the same strategies.

Profit is the bottom line, not concern for young people.