To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Re: Senate Bill 364, the so-called “Tobacco 21” legislation, relating to: raising the legal age for sale, purchase, and possession of cigarettes and nicotine and tobacco products, providing a legal age for sale, purchase, and possession of vapor products, and providing a penalty.

My name is Jim Karedes, Principal at Delavan-Darien High School in Walworth County. My administrative team is completely for Senate Bill 364, requiring the legal age to purchase vaping products and tobacco to be set at 21 years of age. We have experienced, first hand, the prevalence and rising usage of vaping products by our middle and high school student populations. The flavors that mask the chemicals are marketed directly to developing brains in our middle & high school students. Requiring the purchaser to be at a minimum of 21 years of age will help keep the products out of our building and away from our students for consumption. Too frequently our seniors and 18 year old students are purchasing these items and selling/providing them to our younger students. We fully support healthy choices for our youth in the Delavan-Darien community.

I would like to share the data (below) to support SB 364. I have taken the liberty to assemble our Youth Risk Behavior Survey data from the 2018-19 academic year for both Phoenix Middle School & Delavan-Darien High School (both members of the Delavan-Darien School District). Additionally, I was able to further assemble data from 6 of the 13 high schools (public, charter, virtual or other type of school) as only 6 of them (46%) participated in the survey. Participating schools included: Elkhorn Area, Delavan-Darien, Whitewater, East Troy, Lake Geneva Badger and the Walworth County Alternative High School. Finally, there were also 14 public schools in Walworth County that served middle school students. 5 of the 14 (36%) middle schools (public, charter, virtual or other type of school) participated in the survey.
The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asks students about both traditional tobacco products and electronic tobacco products. Questions about electronic tobacco were added to Wisconsin’s state YRBS in 2017. The 2019 survey asked about current and lifetime use of electronic vapor products, such as JUUL.

By the tables below, you can see:

- 17% of DDHS students reported vaping in the 2018-19 academic year;
- 18% of Walworth County high school students...
- 15% of Phoenix Middle School students...
- 9% of Walworth County middle school students...

![Bar charts showing vaping percentages by grade, gender, and school district.](image-url)
By the tables below, you can see:

48% of DDHS students reported having tried vaping;
41% of Walworth County high school students...
Students were asked about a number of other tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, and chew or other smokeless tobacco products. The charts below show the percent of students who responded affirmatively to any of these questions about traditional tobacco products.

By the tables below, you can see:

9% of DDHS students reported using “other” tobacco products;
9% of Walworth County high school students…
6% of Phoenix Middle School students…
4% of Walworth County middle school students…
Tobacco Cessation

Students were asked whether they had tried to quit using any tobacco products, including electronic tobacco products.

By the tables below, you can see:
- 38% of DDHS students reported trying to quit vapes or tobacco use;
- 42% of Walworth County high school students...

![Graphs showing percentage of students quitting vapes or tobacco by grade and gender for Delavan-Darien High School and Walworth Cty High Schools.](Image)
Students were asked how many hours per week they participate in “school activities, such as sports, band, drama or clubs”. The chart below shows students who indicated that they spent any time during a typical week participating in such activities.

This data is shared to model that until we get 100% of our students involved in extracurricular activities, there is time for them to make poor choices before or after school hours.

By the tables below, you can see:
- 57% of DDHS students reported as participating in extracurricular activities in the 2018-19 academic year;
- 67% of Walworth County high school students...
- 66% of Phoenix Middle School students...
- 71% of Walworth County middle school students...
Students were asked how many adults besides their parents they could speak with about an important question affecting their life. The chart below shows students who had at least one such adult.

This data is shared as we know supportive adults are a vital resource in a young person’s life. Parents are a primary source of support for many young people. Having other supportive adults is also important. Until we achieve 100%, we have students receiving advice (including using e-cigarettes) from others that may not otherwise provide the appropriate advice.

By the tables below, you can see:

- 79% of DDHS students reported having a supportive adult;
- 83% of Walworth County high school students…
- 74% of Phoenix Middle School students…
- 79% of Walworth County middle school students…
Students were asked the amount of time per day spent watching television and engaging in other forms of media, such as social media or video games.

This data is shared to model that our students are receiving advertisements from the e-cigarette and nicotine companies in all forms a facets, including social media and television.

By the tables below, you can see:

45% of DDHS students spent 3+ hours per day with screen time;
43% of Walworth County high school students...
75% of Phoenix Middle School students...
57% of Walworth County middle school students...

![Delavan-Darien High School](chart)

![Phoenix Middle School](chart)

![Walworth Cty High Schools](chart)

![Walworth Cty Middle Schools](chart)
Final Talking Points:

- Delavan-Darien High School has cited 28 students this year for underage vaping.
- The Southern Lakes Conference, representing schools in Kenosha, Racine & Walworth County’s meets monthly as a leadership team and each time we have met this year, the first topic of discussion has repeatedly been pertaining to vaping in our high schools.
- As the PROM season begins for high schools, many districts will see 18 year old (and older) students arrive with vapes, providing yet one more avenue for students to obtain these devices.
- Delavan-Darien High School has had a minimum of one vaping incident per week this academic year.
- Wisconsin schools are directly experiencing the vaping and e-cigarette epidemic, directly handling the fallout from rising teen nicotine addiction.
- Due to the flavor and marketing campaigns by e-cigarette and vaping vendors, districts have seen an immense increase in students using and selling these products to their peers.
- In Wisconsin, the average is 1:5 high schoolers using e-cigarettes. The middle school use is 1:9.
- The urgency is upon us now, before more illness and deaths associated with vaping occur, to take action to protect our students.
- We have direct links (noted above) that our current 18 year old students are providing our middle & high school aged students with access to e-cigarettes and vapes. Raising the minimum purchasing age from 18 to 21 would not necessarily negate, but would certainly reduce the number of middle and high school aged students that would have access to these products.

Thank you for listening and supporting the legislation (SB 364) to support all students in the Delavan-Darien District, Walworth County and the State of Wisconsin.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Karedes, Principal
Delavan-Darien High School
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