



UPDATE FROM THE WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE April 7, 2019

Congratulations to the Murdock Student Council for hosting the Central District of Massachusetts Association of Student Councils Spring Conference on Friday, April 5. Your leadership skills and commitment to our school community were proudly displayed at this event. A special thanks to our students and advisor, Stephanie Rondeau who worked endlessly to make the event a success.

DISTRICT SURVEY

Dear Winchendon Parents and Guardians,

We know that students' social and emotional well-being and the supports we provide to families make a big difference for students' academic outcomes. Our schools must provide a safe environment for all so your children can thrive and learn.

I am writing today to ask for your assistance as we work to create a positive, supportive environment for students and their families. Please complete the district's survey [here](#), so we can learn the best ways to accomplish this goal.

Respectfully,
Joan Landers
Interim Superintendent

WINCHENDON SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Winchendon School Committee will take place on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at the town hall on the second floor at 6:30 p.m.

MURDOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL APRIL SCHOOL VACATION EXTRA HELP

During the week of April 15, Murdock Middle School will be offering extra help sessions for students that need to get caught up on work or need additional help on school work. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, teachers will be available from 9:00 to 11:30 at the middle school. Students can attend one, two or all of the days; however, students are asked to participate for the complete session.

If you have questions, please call the main office at 978.297.1256 ext. 5101.

PRE-K SCREENING

Paperwork mailed out the last week of March is due back by April 12, 2019. Screening appointments will be scheduled on Wednesday, May 8 or Wednesday, May 15. Please call the Winchendon Pre-K Program at 978-297-3436 with any questions.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

If you have a child that will be eligible for the 2019-2020 kindergarten school year, use the link below to complete registration forms.

<https://5il.co/6sxz>

Open Enrollment Registration runs from March 18 through April 12 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please call the Memorial School Office at 978-297-1305 with any questions.

DATES TO REMEMBER

School Spring vacation April 15 – 19, 2019

Memorial School McTeacher's Night at McDonald's will take place on the evenings of April 10 and April 24. Grades Pre-K and K will host on April 10 from 5:00-7:00 pm, and Grades 1 and 2 will host April 24 from 5:00-7:00 pm. Teachers will be working on the designated evening, and a percentage of the sales will help support our annual Field Day and other student activities like pizza parties and supplies for our school store.

STUDENT VAPING, MARIJUANA, AND OPIOIDS – RISKS AND RESOURCES

From: Monica Bharel, MD, MPH, Commissioner, Department of Public Health,

Date: Friday, April 5, 2019

School faculty and staff play a key role in educating, identifying needs, and providing support for referrals for students with substance use related problems as well as working with families to address these issues. The information below is meant to serve as a resource on how schools can address the increased use of vaping and marijuana as well as prevent the use of opioids. We would be grateful if you would also share this information with parents/guardians, and Parent Teacher Organization (PTOs), to include them in these efforts.

Vaping

To protect our youth from the health risks of tobacco and nicotine addiction, a new set of Massachusetts state laws dealing with the sale and use of traditional tobacco products and vaping products went into effect on December 31, 2018. These laws expanded "tobacco product" definition to include vaping products and prohibits anyone under the age of 21 from purchasing these products.

Electronic nicotine delivery systems are noncombustible tobacco products, and are known by many different names. They are sometimes called e-cigarettes, e-cigs, mods, vape pens, vapes, or JUULs. Most vaping devices contain and deliver nicotine. Nicotine use in early adolescence causes changes in the brain that make life-long addiction much more likely for young vape users. These devices are still very new, so many of the long-term health consequences of their use is not known. Still, mounting evidence shows that these devices are not harmless.

A new public awareness campaign aimed at youth, [*Different Product, Same Dangers*](#), was created with input and feedback from young people across the state. Also, view a [toolkit](#) to address the use of e-cigarettes in schools and communities along with facts and information for parents.

Marijuana

Now that marijuana is legal in Massachusetts for adults 21 and older, parents and others may wonder how to talk to children and teens about marijuana, its increased availability, and its effects. Regular marijuana use by teens can affect memory and cause learning problems, aggression, anxiety, and increase risky behaviors. It is never too early to start having age-appropriate conversations with children and teens about the risks of marijuana.

Learn [how marijuana can affect the body, mind, and health as well prevention resources](#).

Opioids

Another topic of concern of course is the opioid epidemic, which shows little sign of letting up across the country. We know that 2 out of 3 teens misusing prescription pain meds say they get them from family and/or friends, and some teens share their prescriptions or may sell them to peers and classmates.

A [Massachusetts campaign](#) focuses on increasing awareness in adults and parents about the power of talking with youth. We know from research that teens who talk with parents or other adult about opioids are less likely to misuse them.

If you have identified a child or family in need of treatment services, the **Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline** is the statewide, public resource for finding substance use treatment and recovery services. Helpline services are free and confidential, and trained specialists can assist families in navigating the treatment system and available options. Visit the [Helpline](#) or call 800-327-5050.

A host of materials is available on our newly updated website, the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse: www.mass.gov/maclearinghouse. We encourage all those who work with children and youth to visit the site and download our free materials on these and many other public health topics.

One additional note: if you have identified a child or family in need of treatment services, the Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline is a confidential resource for finding substance use treatment and recovery services. Trained specialists can help families navigate the treatment system and available options. Visit <https://helplinema.org/> or call 800-327-5050.

Thank you as always for helping to protect youth and keep the next generation safe from the harm of nicotine, marijuana, and opioid addiction. Should you have any questions, please contact [Samantha Graham](#), Substance Use Prevention and Intervention Specialist at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. You may also contact [Brian Jenney](#) at the Department of Public Health.

Last Updated: April 5, 2019