



# Alternatives to PUP Policies

In Wisconsin and in our communities, we've seen a notable uptick in possession, use, and purchase (PUP) policies as a strategy to address youth tobacco use. We know that these strategies have the potential to do more harm than good and that there are alternative strategies that are more supportive in quitting.

## What are PUP policies?

Possession, use, and purchase (PUP) policies target and penalize youth for possessing, using, or purchasing tobacco products. Examples of PUP ordinances and policies might include suspension from school, community service, monetary fines, and incarceration because of a student's nicotine addiction.

## PUP policies disparately affect marginalized youth...

**Youth of color** — as well as **LGBT youth, youth with disabilities, and boys** — are more likely to smoke because these populations have been targeted via advertising and retailer placement by the tobacco industry.<sup>1</sup>

High smoking rates are correlated with **low income**, and there are more tobacco retailers and advertisements in less affluent areas. Consequently, low-income youth are more likely to smoke and be affected by PUP laws.<sup>1</sup>

## ...which perpetuates inequitable health outcomes.



Wisconsin DPI student incident data show **significant disparities in suspensions and expulsions** in schools across the state for Indigenous and Black students, other students of color, and students with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>



Students who find themselves on the receiving end of harsh school discipline policies are also **more likely to face adversity and toxic stress** outside of school.<sup>3</sup>



Research shows penalties like expulsion and suspension result in **negative educational and life outcomes**.<sup>4</sup>

# PUP policies are ineffective and can have unintended consequences.

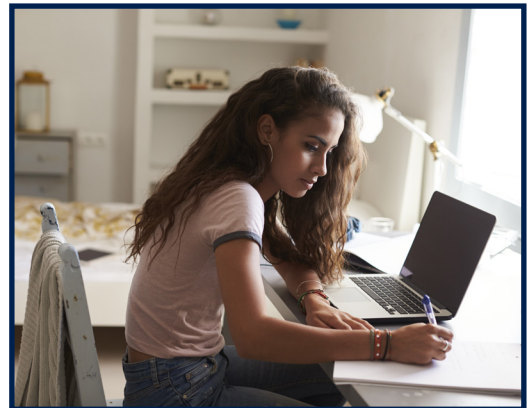
- Tobacco companies and their allies have a long history of supporting PUP laws to shift the blame away from the tobacco industry.
- These laws are ineffective as they focus on the unfair punishment and stigmatization of youth. In addition, penalizing youth can be counterproductive as it can push youth to engage in behavior deemed as deviant or associated with adulthood and it can also deter them from seeking support for cessation when addicted.

## There are effective alternatives to PUP policies.

Schools have an interest in addressing behavior that is disruptive and harmful to health, and can consider weighing the severity of the infraction with the consequences and effectiveness of the punishment. Schools seeking to avoid punitive measures in their tobacco-free policy may consider the following non-exhaustive list of alternatives to suspension programs:

- [INDEPTH](#) (American Lung Association)
- [The Rise of Vaping](#) (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids)
- [Aspire](#) (MD Anderson Cancer Center)
- [Healthy Futures](#) (Stanford University)

*The programs listed above are for reference only, and are not an official endorsement.*



### Additional Resources

- [Addressing Student Commercial Tobacco Use in Schools: Alternative Measures](#)
- [School Discipline Practices: A Public Health Crisis and an Opportunity for Reform](#)
- [PUP in Smoke: Why Youth Tobacco Possession and Use Penalties Are Ineffective and Inequitable](#)

### Citations

1. [PUP in Smoke: Why Youth Tobacco Possession and Use Penalties Are Ineffective and Inequitable](#) (ChangeLab Solutions)
2. [WISEdash](#) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
3. [School Discipline Practices: A Public Health Crisis and an Opportunity for Reform](#) (ChangeLab Solutions)
4. [Policy Statement: Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion](#) (American Academy of Pediatrics)