South Dakota Department of Health

Tobacco-Free K-12 Policy Evaluation Guide

The attached guide and rubric serve as an internal scoring tool for secondary institutions to evaluate their existing tobacco-free policies in their respective districts. The resource closely mirrors tools referenced and adapted by South Dakota State University's 2015 policy evaluation guide[1] and follows close consideration provided by the Centers for Disease Control[2].

The K-12 policies were evaluated in comparison to the recommended model policy provided by the South Dakota Department of Health. These policies were made in collaboration with feedback from the Mitchell Hamline School of Law and various community partners. The overall policy score was then determined by taking the sum of all sections and dividing by 5, with 5 being the maximum score given to a policy.

To access the South Dakota Department of Health's recommended tobacco-free policies, please visit https://quittobaccosd.com/resources/advocacy-tools/policy-support-materials.

For more information or permission to use this attached guide, please contact Hilary Larsen (Hilary.Larsen@state.sd.us).

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[1] https://goodandhealthysd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/HealthcareModelTFPolicyAssessmentTool.pdf
[2] https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/tobacco-control/pdfs/evaluation_toolkit.pdf

Tobacco-Free K-12 Policy Evaluation Guide

School District Name/Code: _____ **Date:** _____ **Scorer:** _____ **OVERALL:** _____/20

Section A. Product Coverage		
A1. E-cigarette/vapes? **YES** or **NO**	A2. Synthetic nicotine? **YES** or **NO**	A3. Smokeless tobacco? **YES** or **NO**
A4. Traditional tobacco exceptions? **YES** or **NO**	A5. Cessation product exceptions? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: _____ / 5

Section B. Facilities		
B1. All school grounds? **YES** or **NO**	B2. School vehicles? **YES** or **NO**	B3. Students, staff, and visitors? **YES** or **NO**
B4. Off-campus/school-sponsored events? **YES** or **NO**	B5. Personal vehicles on school grounds? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: _____ / 5

Section C. Consequences		
C1. Consequences clearly listed? **YES** or **NO**	C2. Chemical education offered? **YES** or **NO**	C3. Notification of parents/guardians? **YES** or **NO**
C4. Alternative to suspension? **YES** or **NO**	C5. Referral to SD Quitline, or another appropriate cessation tool? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: _____ / 5

Section D. Communication/Implementation		
D1. General communication of policy? **YES** or **NO**	D2. Signage about policy? **YES** or **NO**	D3. Available in student handbook? **YES** or **NO**
D4. Designates individual/office responsible for policy? **YES** or **NO**	D5. Revised within past five (5) years? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: ____ / 5

Section E. Other Considerations – NO POINTS ASSIGNED		
E1. Does the policy require staff training on enforcement and how to support students in cessation efforts? **YES** or **NO**	E2. Does the policy prohibit marketing and advertising from tobacco companies in their district? **YES** or **NO**	E3. Does the policy prohibit tobacco waste on school grounds? **YES** or **NO**

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

SECTION SCORING SPECIFICS & EXPLANATIONS

Section A: Product Coverage

Section A. Product Coverage					
A1. E-cigarette/vapes? **YES** or **NO**		A2. Synthetic nicotine? **YES** or **NO**		A3. Smokeless tobacco? **YES** or **NO**	
A4. Traditional tobacco exceptions? **YES** or **NO**		A5. Cessation product exceptions? **YES** or **NO**			
				SECTION: _____ / 5	

Rationale:

This section assesses the comprehensiveness of the policy in addressing various tobacco and nicotine products. Effective tobacco control policies should clearly define the scope of regulated products to avoid loopholes and ensure consistency in enforcement. A strong policy should cover a broad range of products, including emerging nicotine delivery systems and exceptions for cessation products where applicable.

Instructions:

For each product category, indicate **YES** if the policy explicitly includes it and **NO** if it does not.

- **A1. E-cigarette/vapes:** Does the policy regulate e-cigarettes and vaping devices?
- **A2. Synthetic nicotine:** Does the policy cover synthetic/analog nicotine used in products like pouches or lozenges?
- **A3. Smokeless tobacco:** Does the policy include products like chewing tobacco, snus, and dissolvable tobacco?
- **A4. Traditional tobacco exceptions:** Does the policy make exceptions for specific traditional tobacco products (e.g., ceremonial or cultural use)?
- **A5. Cessation product exceptions:** Does the policy exclude FDA-approved cessation products (e.g., nicotine patches, gum, lozenges) from restrictions?

Each "YES" answer earns **1 point**, with a total possible score of **5 points**.

Section B: Facilities

Section B. Facilities		
B1. All school grounds? **YES** or **NO**	B2. School vehicles? **YES** or **NO**	B3. Students, staff, and visitors? **YES** or **NO**
B4. Off-campus/school-sponsored events? **YES** or **NO**	B5. Personal vehicles on school grounds? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: ____ / 5

Rationale:

This section evaluates the extent to which the policy applies to different school-related environments. A strong tobacco-free policy should cover all school grounds, vehicles, individuals on campus, and events, ensuring a consistent and enforceable standard for a tobacco-free environment.

Instructions:

Review the policy and determine whether it explicitly includes each facility or situation. Mark **"YES"** if the policy prohibits tobacco use in the specified area or for the specified group, and **"NO"** if it does not.

- **B1. All school grounds:** Does the policy prohibit tobacco use on all school property, including buildings, outdoor spaces, and playgrounds?
- **B2. School vehicles:** Does the policy apply to school buses and other school-owned or operated vehicles?
- **B3. Students, staff, and visitors:** Does the policy apply to everyone on school grounds, including students, employees, and visitors?
- **B4. Off-campus/school-sponsored events:** Does the policy extend to school-sponsored activities held off-campus, such as field trips, athletic events, or extracurricular activities?
- **B5. Personal vehicles on school grounds:** Does the policy prohibit tobacco use inside personal vehicles while on school property?

Each "YES" response earns **1 point**, for a maximum of **5 points** in this section.

Section C: Consequences

Section C. Consequences		
C1. Consequences clearly listed? **YES** or **NO**	C2. Chemical education offered? **YES** or **NO**	C3. Notification of parents/guardians? **YES** or **NO**
C4. Alternative to suspension? **YES** or **NO**	C5. Referral to SD Quitline, or another appropriate cessation tool? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: _____ / 5

Rationale:

This section evaluates whether the policy outlines clear and supportive consequences for violations. A strong policy should prioritize education and cessation support over punitive measures, ensuring students receive the necessary resources to quit rather than just facing punishment. For more information on supported alternative to suspension programs, please review the [South Dakota Department of Health model policy for K-12 Institutions](#).

Instructions:

Review the policy to determine whether it includes each of the following components. Mark **"YES"** if the policy explicitly includes the measure and **"NO"** if it does not.

- **C1. Consequences clearly listed:** Does the policy clearly outline the consequences for violations, ensuring consistency in enforcement?
- **C2. Chemical education offered:** Does the policy provide educational programs about the risks of tobacco and nicotine use?
- **C3. Notification of parents/guardians:** Does the policy require that parents or guardians be informed when a student violates the tobacco policy?
- **C4. Alternative to suspension:** Does the policy include disciplinary options other than suspension, such as educational interventions or counseling?
- **C5. Referral to SD Quitline or another cessation tool:** Does the policy direct violators to evidence-based cessation resources, such as the SD Quitline or similar support programs?

Each "YES" response earns **1 point**, for a maximum of **5 points** in this section.

Section D: Communication/Implementation

Section D. Communication/Implementation		
D1. General communication of policy? **YES** or **NO**	D2. Signage about policy? **YES** or **NO**	D3. Available in student handbook? **YES** or **NO**
D4. Designates individual/office responsible for policy?　**YES** or **NO**	D5. Revised within past five (5) years? **YES** or **NO**	
		SECTION: _____ / 5

Rationale:

A well-written policy is only effective if it is clearly communicated, accessible, and regularly updated. This section assesses whether the policy is properly communicated to students, staff, and visitors, as well as whether there is accountability for its enforcement and regular review.

Instructions:

Review the policy and determine whether it includes each of the following elements. Mark **"YES"** if the policy explicitly includes the measure and **"NO"** if it does not.

- **D1. General communication of policy:** Is the tobacco policy actively communicated to students, staff, and visitors (e.g., through meetings, announcements, or other means)?
- **D2. Signage about policy:** Are signs posted around school grounds to clearly indicate that tobacco use is prohibited?
- **D3. Available in student handbook:** Is the policy included in the student handbook or another easily accessible resource?
- **D4. Designates individual/office responsible for policy:** Does the policy specify who is responsible for enforcing and overseeing its implementation (e.g., a specific administrator or office)?
- **D5. Revised within past five (5) years:** Has the policy been updated within the last five years to reflect current best practices and emerging tobacco/nicotine trends?

Each "YES" response earns **1 point**, for a maximum of **5 points** in this section.