



SCARSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2 Brewster Road
Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583

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November 23, 2021

VIA Email

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Trustee Jonathan E. Lewis
Trustee Randall B. Whitestone
Scarsdale Village Hall
1001 Post Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583

Dear Mayor Veron and Village Trustees:

We write in response to the email from Trustee Crandall dated November 11, 2021, welcoming the Scarsdale School Board's participation at the Village Board's Public Hearing on potential legislation to opt out of cannabis consumption lounges and/or dispensaries, as well as limits on smoking in Village-owned properties. Thank you for this opportunity to comment and share the Board's opinion.

In consideration of the Scarsdale School Board's broad authority over the educational affairs of the District and its students, the Board respectfully encourages the Village Trustees to adopt local laws to (i) opt out of the authority to grant licenses for marijuana dispensaries and social consumption sites within its territorial boundaries and (ii) prohibit the burning of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or vape system which contains tobacco or cannabis in Village facilities, recreation spaces and vehicles and any business district located in the Village of Scarsdale.

School boards are obligated under New York Education Law, §804 to implement a curriculum that instructs students about the dangers of tobacco and drugs. The [Health Education Curriculum at Scarsdale Middle School and Scarsdale High School](#) comports with the [New York State and National Standards for Health Education](#) by providing substance abuse prevention education to (i) help students understand the short- and long-term effects of tobacco and drugs on physical, mental/emotional and social health, and especially on the developing adolescent brain, and (ii) learn resistance methods for preventing substance abuse and avoiding risky behaviors.

One of the pillars of the [District's Strategic Plan](#) is [Wellness and Well-Being](#). Scarsdale's curriculum, therefore, also focuses on the development of personal and social skills to help students manage stress effectively, resist maladaptive coping mechanisms, make responsible decisions, maintain healthy lifestyles, and advocate for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

The Scarsdale Board of Education has a [Code of Conduct \(Policy 5300\)](#) for the school community that addresses a range of prohibited behaviors concerning the use or possession of drugs and tobacco, in addition to other controlled substances (see Public Conduct (5300.70) and Regulation 4 – Examples of Unacceptable Conduct: Endangering the Safety, Morals, Health, or Welfare of Others). A member of the Scarsdale Board of Education also serves on the [Scarsdale Drug and Alcohol Task Force](#) in support of this multi-stakeholder coalition's efforts to promote a substance-free culture in our community.

Local marijuana dispensaries and social consumption sites, in addition to the burning of tobacco and marijuana in public spaces, therefore, are inconsistent with the pedagogy, policy, and tenets of the Scarsdale Public Schools.

In addition, last spring, [the Pride Student Survey](#) was completed by 1,140 Scarsdale High School students, representing 75% of students. Various perceptions of risk associated with marijuana and alcohol and varied perceptions on how friends perceive the risk associated with marijuana and alcohol are considered potential risk factors for students. The data reveals that our students perceive marijuana as being less dangerous than alcohol (51.1% for marijuana vs. 75.2% for alcohol). It also reveals less perception of risk by friends (friend disapproval of marijuana was 44% vs. 74.2% for alcohol).

Current education and prevention efforts need to increase to change the perception of marijuana's risk, especially to the developing brains of young people. Having local cannabis

dispensaries and lounges is counter to this effort and will likely send the wrong message to our youth.

In closing, know that we appreciate having this opportunity to comment on a decision that may impact both the youth of Scarsdale and our schools. We very much appreciate your thoughtful leadership.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Ceske
Karen M. Ceske (Nov 22, 2021 17:07 EST)

Karen M. Ceske, President
Scarsdale Board of Education

Amber N. Yusuf
Amber N. Yusuf (Nov 22, 2021 17:40 EST)

Amber N. Yusuf, Vice President
Scarsdale Board of Education