

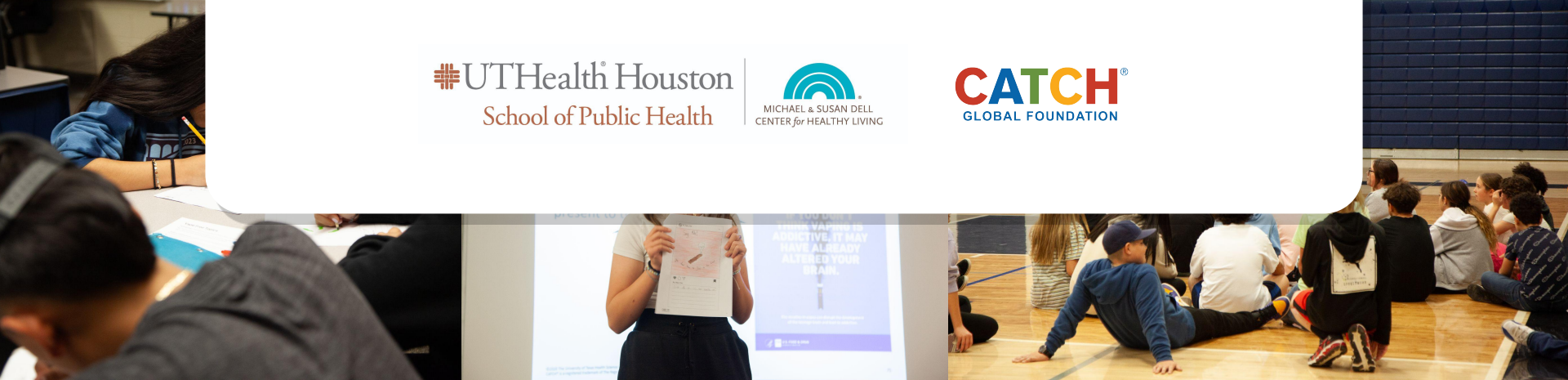


# When Students Lead, Prevention Works

 **UTHealth Houston**  
School of Public Health

  
MICHAEL & SUSAN DELL  
CENTER for HEALTHY LIVING

**CATCH**<sup>®</sup>  
GLOBAL FOUNDATION



# Our Moderator



**Duncan Van Dusen, MPH**

**Founder & CEO**  
CATCH Global Foundation



## Mission

We champion child health by empowering educators with curriculum, training, and ongoing support to foster communities that thrive in mind, heart, and body.



Annual reach  
**4,300,000 kids**

47% of whom are low-income



**2.1 million**

digital lessons accessed cumulatively over the past six years



Used by  
**16,500 educators**

from all 50 states and 27 other countries in the school year 2024-2025



**\$20.2 million**

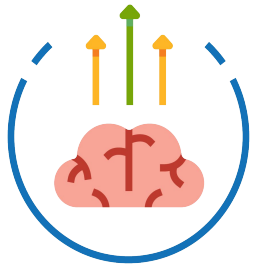
in youth health education programming delivered to communities over 11 years

*(84 cents of every dollar of revenue goes to Community Programs)*

# Self-Reinforcing Cycle



# CATCH's Proven Formula for Healthy Behavior Promotion & Adoption



**KNOWLEDGE  
BUILDING**

**SKILL BUILDING**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUPPORT**

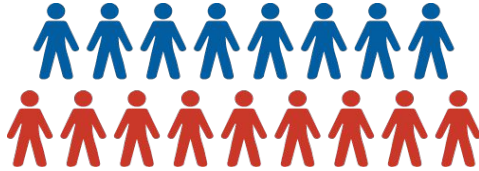
**STUDENT SUCCESS**

**IMPACT ON AN  
AVERAGE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL'S  
7TH GRADE CLASS  
(192 STUDENTS):**



**17**

**will try** e-cigarettes  
**if** we do nothing



**8**

would be **prevented**  
with **CATCH My Breath**



**153,600**

**fewer students** would try  
e-cigarettes this year if implemented  
in all public schools

**“The best way to learn is to teach and the best way to believe is to evangelize.”**

***-When Are We Going to Teach Health?***

# Today's Panelists



**Dr. Steven Kelder, MPH,  
PhD**

**Professor, Dept of Epidemiology**  
Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy  
Living, University of Texas School of  
Public Health



**Sarah Planche, M.Ed.**

**Education Administrator,**  
Tobacco Use Prevention Education  
CA Department of Education



**Heather Hansen**

**Vape and Tobacco Coordinator,**  
Eastern Idaho Public Health

# REASONS **WHY** TEENS VAPE



**Dr. Steven Kelder, MPH,  
PhD**

**Professor, Dept of Epidemiology**  
Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy  
Living, University of Texas School of  
Public Health

## Why Teens Start



**HIGH SCHOOL:**

*“Friends use them”*

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

*“Curious about them”*

## Why They Don't Stop



**HIGH SCHOOL &  
MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

*“I am feeling anxious,  
stressed, or depressed”*

# Peer-Led Learning Benefits Youth



## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS *as Peer Educators*



Build leadership, communication, and teaching skills



Boost confidence, self-esteem, and motivation



Deepen knowledge about health topics



Make a positive impact in their school and community



Strengthen connections, empathy, and pro-social thinking



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS *as Learners*



Feel more comfortable asking questions and having honest conversations



Receive messages in a relatable, non judgemental way



Improve knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making



More likely to make healthier choices and resist peer pressure



Relate more to someone closer in age and life experience

## KEY PILLARS OF HIGH-QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION



### STRONG SCHOOL SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

- ✓ Secure commitment from school leadership and staff.
- ✓ Align the program with school goals and priorities.
- ✓ Provide time in the schedule and space for activities.
- ✓ Celebrate student leadership and program successes.



Supportive schools create the conditions for programs to thrive.



### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT TRAINING IS CRITICAL

- ✓ Use strong, interactive training to build knowledge, teaching skills, and confidence.
- ✓ Cover content, facilitation skills, classroom management, and peer influence strategies.
- ✓ Provide practice opportunities and feedback.
- ✓ Refresher trainings keep skills sharp and students motivated.



Well-trained peer educators deliver consistent, engaging, and effective lessons.



### ONGOING MONITORING ENSURES QUALITY

- ✓ Teachers conduct occasional spot evaluations of student-led sessions.
- ✓ Use simple fidelity checklists to assess key elements.
- ✓ Provide constructive feedback and coaching.
- ✓ Address challenges early and celebrate strengths.



Monitoring and feedback help programs stay on track and improve over time.

### WHEN THESE ELEMENTS WORK TOGETHER...



Students feel confident and prepared.



Lessons are delivered with fidelity and impact.



Healthy choices are promoted.



Sustainable change happens in schools and communities.



**Right program. Right people. Right support. Right implementation. Real impact.**

Implementation science helps us turn good ideas into lasting results.



# CALIFORNIA'S STRATEGY: TUPE



**Sarah Planche**

**Education Administrator,**  
Tobacco Use Prevention  
CA Department of Education

## Tobacco-Use Prevention Education (TUPE)

California Department of Education

- Statewide infrastructure supporting **districts, educators, and students**
- **Vision:** Tobacco- and vape-free generation
- **Mission:** Prevent and reduce tobacco and vaping among school-aged youth
- **Capacity Building Project** highlights model programs and best practices, share resources, and support data-driven continuous improvement efforts

# TUPE and CATCH Collaboration

- TUPE-approved curricula includes **CATCH My Breath**
- Now expanding into **Students-Teach-Students model**

*Students report motivation to create change in their own communities*

- Increased engagement
- Stronger peer conversations
- Culture shift toward prevention

# Why we use **CATCH My Breath**

## **Students-teach-Students**

Students gain knowledge and communication skills

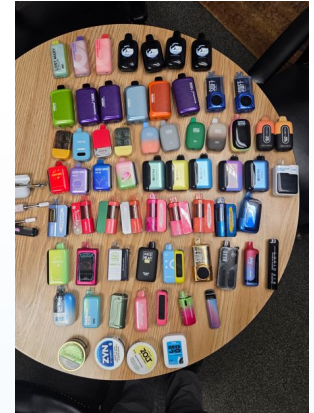
Leadership skills in public speaking, planning, and decision-making

Increase reach and trustworthiness - messages can be more effective delivered by peers

A shift from “talking at” students to “talking with” them

We believe in the two fold power of Peer Education:  
**Youth Empowerment** and **Skill Building**

# Constant Evolution



Very hard for adult educators to keep up

# Lessons Learned

## Strong Foundation

- Infrastructure
- Alignment with **approved, evidence-based curriculum**
- A consistent, committed **adult ally**

## Structured Support

- **Training for educators and student leaders**
- Ongoing support through **communities of practice**
- Clear integration with **SEL and existing school programs**
- Local schools adapt delivery to fit their environment

## Student Leadership Model

- High school students trained to deliver to younger peers
- Emphasis on **authenticity, relatability, and peer norms**

# Voices of Change

Student leadership, Community impact

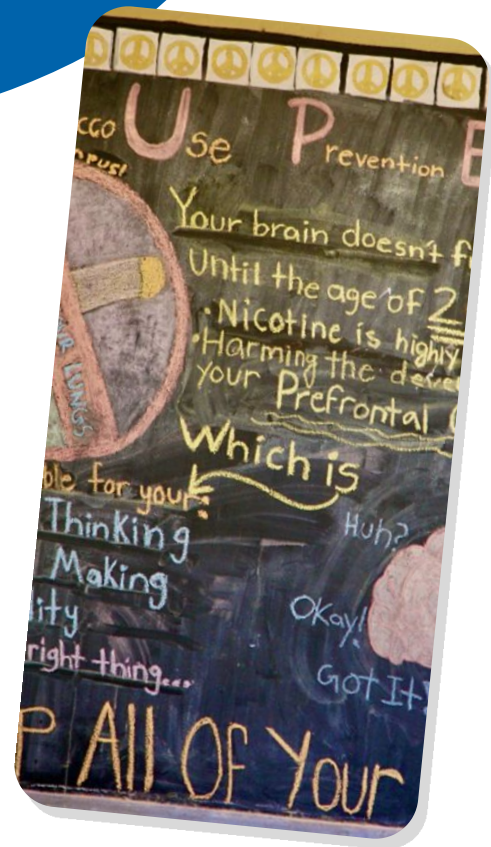
- Peer educators delivered prevention alongside SEL
- Focus on decision-making, peer resistance, and positive culture building
- Approach: “Put ups, not put downs”

Los Angeles Unified  
School District

“I realized so many students didn’t understand the effects of tobacco products. I felt like I could make a difference.”

- Kira Samson,  
junior and peer educator

Redwood  
High School



# Get Involved!



- Learn more and explore available resources  
*Visit [tupeca.org](https://tupeca.org)*
- Questions?  
*Email [tupe@cde.ca.gov](mailto:tupe@cde.ca.gov)*

# IDAHO FROM PILOT TO PRACTICE



**Heather Hansen**

Vape and Tobacco Coordinator,  
Eastern Idaho Public Health

- Regional public health-led implementation across Eastern Idaho
- **Every county** in Idaho offers CATCH My Breath
- Early adoption of **Students-Teach-Students (STS)** model
  - **SY 23-24** Co-development & pilot
  - **SY 24-25** Expanded implementation
  - **SY 25-26** Added curriculum

# Idaho and CATCH Collaboration



- Discovered **CATCH** through a **local coalition partnership**
- Heather became **certified in CATCH My Breath** to bring into the region
- **Students-Teach-Students** emerged **from community need**, not mandate
- Built support through
  - Bonneville Youth Development Council
  - Local coalitions
  - School and district leadership
- Expanded through **community presentations and stakeholder training**

# From Community Idea to Real Implementation

- Expanded from coalition-led effort into **multi-county implementation**
- **7 counties** with trained staff
- **3 schools in 3 counties actively implementing STS**, 4th school coming school year 26-27



# Scaling Student Reach

**1,070**

**2023 - 2024** students participating

**1,898**

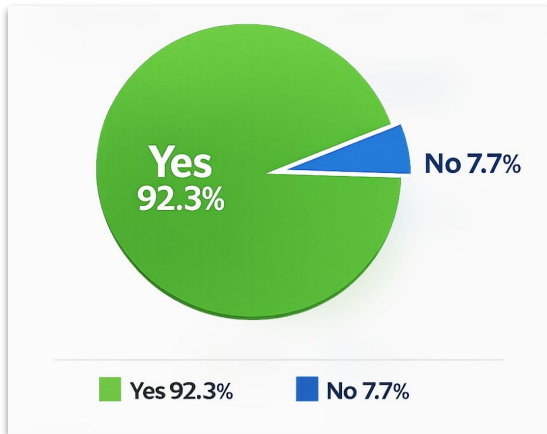
**2024 - 2025** students participating.  
Grades 7-12, including juvenile facilities

**~2,100**

**2025 - 2026** students participating

# Lessons Learned

## Peer Leader Survey



>92% **successfully delivered full sessions within allotted time**

- Every school operates differently → **need flexibility**
- Peer leaders need **time to practice and build confidence**
- Adult presence improves **quality and consistency**

# PRE/POST SURVEY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TAUGHT BY PEER LEADERS IN IDAHO (~575 STUDENTS):

Construct	Scale	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	P-Value	Change
Critical Thinking	1-5	2.30	2.87	<0.01**	+25%
Perceptions of Threats to Health	0-1	0.97	0.99	<0.01**	+2%
Self-Efficacy	1-5	4.36	4.45	0.04*	+2%
School Connectedness <sup>^</sup>	1-5	3.97	4.05	0.09	+2%

<sup>^</sup> school connectedness included due to high correlation with self-efficacy

# WHAT PEER LEADERS EXPERIENCE



“ The slides were very simple to follow and it was helpful to have different opportunities to ask for answers from the class. I enjoyed teaching the students and felt like I learned more myself!

”

- Peer Leader, Idaho

# What Happened in the Classroom

## 84% of peer leaders reported strong student engagement

Students responded most to:

- Real-life stories
- Interactive activities

Peer-led delivery created:

- More open participation
- Less fear of judgment
- Higher engagement overall

"I saw lots of eyes looking up and there was good participation from multiple students in the class."

"I think teaching them what to do when the problem arises was good. A lot of them had good answers, and had a good plan ready for when situations come."

**"I can't believe that you trust us to deliver this program."**

*"...they all wanted to share on why they choose not to use an E-cigarette."*

# What Happened in the Classroom



# When Students Lead, Prevention Works



## Summary STS Implementation Model

- 2 hour implementation training for adult facilitators (open seats or private format)
- Strongly recommend previous experience teaching CATCH My Breath
- Adult facilitators train high school peer leaders to teach middle school students, with adult presence in room
- Estimated prep time for peer leaders is 3-5 hours
- Peer leaders use 7th-8th grade module of CATCH My Breath
  - Can work in teams or rotate so that different peers cover different sessions of program

# What's Next?



## Students-Teach-Students Professional Development



- Bring CATCH My Breath to your school and sign-up for training along with other resources  
Visit [catchmybreath.org](https://catchmybreath.org)
- Explore more CATCH professional development supporting whole-child wellness  
Visit [catch.org/professional-development](https://catch.org/professional-development)
- Share the webinar with a colleague or district leader



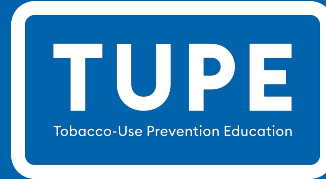
**Q&A**  
Any questions?

# Contact Us



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