



## What is the “Vape Disease,” and What Does It Mean for Generation-Z?

Lily Morgan, Senior  
NEWS EDITOR

By now, everybody has heard about the new, inexplicable “vaping disease.” Over 1,000 cases have been reported in 48 states and one U.S. territory, and eighteen deaths have been confirmed. Medical professionals are unsure of what specifically is causing this rapidly-spreading infection, but they have tested hypotheses regarding vitamin-E acetate buildup and the possible dangers of THC-containing products. One fear is that the cause of this illness is the tampering of E-cigarette products by suppliers and sellers, which raises issues of the possible presence of life-threatening and illicit substances in vaping products.

However, the fact that many people find disturbing is that the majority of victims, 80 percent, in fact, are under the age of 35, and approximately 16 percent of people affected are under 18.

The relatively recent introduction of vape products to the national market has proven to be detrimental to the health of young people. Growing up, our generation was bombarded with adults and commercials on Nickelodeon preaching about the dangers of cigarettes. We were forced to watch commercials featuring teenagers pulling out their teeth or ripping off their skin in exchange for a pack of Marlboro Reds as we waited patiently for *Spongebob Squarepants* to come back on.

The push against Big Tobacco in the 1990’s leached into our mindsets, convincing us of the dangers of nicotine. However, when vaping became a thing only a few years ago, it was branded as “safer” than cigarettes. Many people heard safer and just thought safe. The years of anti-nicotine brainwashing that we endured had been unraveled with only one word. Products such as Juuls proved easy for kids to purchase and conceal, causing a dramatic increase in youths’ use of and ultimate addiction to nicotine products.

So, what does this mean for our generation, one that, before vaping was a thing, was unlikely to start smoking? And where do we go from here?

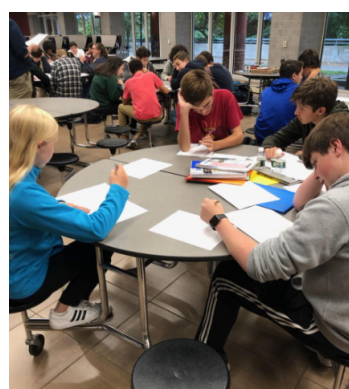
Nicotine addiction and THC-containing vape products have crept into our generation’s life, but in the light of new discoveries about the dangers of E-cigarettes, many youths are vowing to quit vaping. Will kids be more likely to switch back to conventional smoking to avoid the dangers of vape products, or have we retained the lessons from prior generations about the ills of doing so? Hopefully, recent events, such as the incurable vape infection and Massachusetts’ ban on the sale of vaping products, will stop this issue dead in its tracks before more kids and teenagers are subjected to the dangers of addiction.

Source: “Outbreak of Lung Injury Associated with E-Cigarette Use, or Vaping” from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Math Team Wins First Meet of the Year

Jeffrey Lederman, Sophomore,  
REPORTER

The first math meet of the year was a great success. Not only did we win, but we did so by a significant margin. The meet was hosted at Marblehead High School, and high scorers included Daniel Farfel and Ben Winocour, both of whom are in the Junior Class. At Math Team meets, the teams collect in a central area where we get pizza and additional snacks. Then, the rounds begin. Groups of six students from each team come together to solve three challenging problems of varying difficulty, each worth two points. The first question is identical to one given out before the meet, but with different numbers, while the other two are revealed at the meet.



After the teams compete in six rounds, which include topics from Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry, all the team members work together to solve six to ten especially-difficult problems in fifteen minutes. These questions are each worth two points.

Our team is led by Ms. Waitkevich, who teaches us how to solve the questions at our weekly meetings that take place on Tuesdays. Most of the time, however, is spent working on practice problems independently.



Math Team is a lot of fun and is very social. We spend much of the time hanging out with friends, and the atmosphere isn’t nearly as serious as you might think. Overall, we had a great first meet, and I am looking forward to many more.

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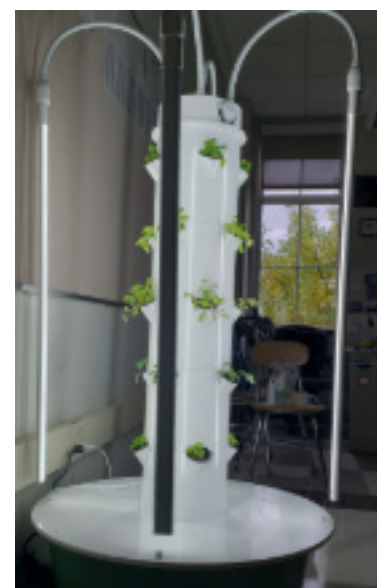
## Environmental Initiatives at MHS

Alexis Earp, Sophomore  
FEATURES EDITOR

Towards the end of September, news about the climate strike dominated the news. While some students from Marblehead High School attended, many were not able to go. With an issue as broad as the climate crisis, it can be difficult to find ways to incite change, especially if you cannot participate in larger community events. So, what can you do? Walking to school is helpful, but it is difficult to walk everywhere you need to go. The good news is, you can contribute to making the planet cleaner right here at MHS.

There are three main environmental initiatives at the school. One of them is recycling. While that may sound like a simple, everyday task that takes care of itself, it isn’t. Volunteers, mainly students in the National Green Schools Society, roll large recycling bins through each wing of the school so that their collections can be taken away later in the week. The first floor is recycled on Mondays and Fridays, the second floor on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the third floor on Wednesday. MHS uses single-stream recycling, meaning that the recycling does not need to be separated into paper, plastic, and glass. Snapple bottles, scrap paper, and plastic drink bottles can all go in the same bin, making sustainability easier for teachers and students.

As their Senior Class Gift, the Class of 2019 bought aquaponic systems for the school. Tower Gardens, placed throughout the school, grow lettuce, rainbow chard, and other greens. All of the food grown will go to the cafeteria for school lunches.



Aquaponic System at MHS

At the beginning of the school year, you may have noticed that there are fewer trash bins at lunch. This is an effort to expand the composting program, which began in 2017 with the help of Maddie Miller and Deanna Buba (Class of 2017). The League of Women Voters gave the school a grant to help ensure that the program started successfully. Until this year, about five gallons of compost were collected each day.

At first, there were problems with maintenance, contamination, and styrofoam in the bags. However, this summer, with help from Mr. Bauer and the Head Custodian Mr. King, the method of waste disposal at lunch was changed. Instead of six trash bins, three recycling bins, and three composting bins placed throughout the cafeteria, there is one of each in a central location. The effect this change has had on the amount of trash was astounding.

The school went from 12 contractor bags per day to just three, meaning the number of trash bags generated decreased by 75 percent. The gallons of compost collected each day went from five to 35, which is a seven-fold, or 600 percent, increase. There are also ten small compost stations in the Foods department, faculty lunch rooms, and special education rooms. Mr. Heenan’s AP and Honors biology classes are responsible for maintaining these composting stations. The next step will be to switch to compostable trays and cutlery in the cafeteria. If you would like to learn more or get involved, you can join clubs like the Environmental Club and the National Green Schools Society.

## MCAS is a Mess

Sophia Piper, Junior  
NEWS EDITOR

As many current juniors remember, last year’s English MCAS was special, to say the least. An entire essay prompt was voided because it was racist—after everyone had already worked hard on their responses. The question asked us to write from the perspective of an openly racist character and explain what the character thought when meeting a runaway slave (which would not be positive). Students taking the test in Boston noticed this and reported the question to their teachers. Soon after, we were delivered the news that the question got thrown out. Seemed harmless; maybe the scoring would just remove those points from the test. We were all disgruntled about it for a few hours (after all, that was a lengthy response we had to write) but then forgot about it.

That is, until last Thursday, when some of us received an email stating that we could retake the MCAS if we wanted to. This retake would give us the opportunity to compete for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which provides tuition for four years at any Massachusetts community college, state college, or university of Massachusetts. That’s a pretty good offer in a time when some private universities are charging over \$70,000 for one year, though that’s a discussion for another time.

If eligible to retake (where retaking could place the student in the top 25% of the class), students must register by October 9th. The retakes themselves will be held from November 6th to the 8th -- during class time, which is mildly annoying. The test will also be on paper instead of on computers. Again, mildly annoying. But perhaps most irksome of all is that the retake is not just one prompt (which is what was voided), it’s an entire ELA section. Even myself, who voluntarily writes for the school newspaper, would not look forward to redoing MCAS reading comprehension questions. They’re torturous.

That being said, no one is forcing anyone to do retakes. It’s just strange how the same question got thrown out on everyone’s test, yet some of our scores were compromised. Wouldn’t everyone’s score still be the same, just out of fewer points? In my biased opinion, we should have gotten those points for free. Silly, I know, but it’s not our fault that the test makers decided to throw in a racist question.



From The Sun Chronicle

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