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Olentangy High School seniors push back against vaping

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A group of Olentangy students is working to combat vaping in district schools -- a problem the students say is even worse than national statistics indicate.

For Olentangy High School seniors Samantha Billy, Josh Gernert, Maggie Powers and JoAnn VanGorder, their investigation of vaping started as a simple class project called "Clearing the Fog."

The four students were working on a public-relations project for their marketing class and quickly came to the conclusion that they should direct their work toward an anti-vaping campaign.

"We had seen the way it had changed some of our friends," Billy said. "Then the FDA stuff came out."

Late last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration released a report that detailed the first recent increase in tobacco use among students, largely due to a 78 percent increase in students using some type of e-cigarette.

The report indicated that 1.5 million more students used e-cigarettes in 2018 than in 2017, and found that more than 20 percent of high school students used some kind of vaping device.

But the group of Olentangy students didn't need a report to tell them vaping was a problem.

"It was really the biggest issue in our school," VanGorder said.



Olen tangy High School seniors, from left, Maggie Powers, Samantha Billy, Joshua Gernert and JoAnn VanGorder are working together on an anti-vaping campaign at the school. According to the group's survey of classmates, more than half have tried vaping in some form, and more than a quarter use e-cigarettes at least weekly.

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