

**Tobacco Free Schools Initiative
Process Evaluation Final Report
October 2011**



**Division of Tobacco Use
Prevention and Control**

**Prepared by:
Center for Social and Behavioral Research
University of Northern Iowa**

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Tobacco Free Schools Initiative

Process Evaluation

Final Report

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**University of
Northern
Iowa**

Center for Social and
Behavioral Research

TUPC Mission Statement:

To establish a comprehensive partnership among state government, local communities, and the people of Iowa to foster a social and legal climate in which tobacco use becomes undesirable and unacceptable.

CSBR Mission Statement:

The Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa will be a leading academic organization dedicated to advancing, applying and facilitating high standards of social and behavioral research practice for a wide variety of audiences within the university and across community, state and national arenas.

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Executive Summary

Iowa Tobacco Free Schools Initiative Process Evaluation

Conducted by the UNI Center for Social and Behavioral Research; October 2011

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (Tobacco Division) contracted with the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) to conduct a process evaluation of the Iowa Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. As part of the initiative, informational packets were sent to administrators of public and private schools across Iowa. The purpose of the process evaluation was to explore the perceptions of school administrators related to tobacco policies in Iowa schools and informational mailings sent to administrators.

Qualitative, telephone-based interviews were conducted with public and private school administrators in Iowa. Administrators were selected at random from the contact list used in the mailing that was distributed in the fall of 2010. Recruitment, scheduling, and interviewing continued on a rolling basis until saturation was reached in the data. A ratio of approximately two-thirds public school administrators and one-third private school administrators was maintained to reflect the approximate distribution of the sample. Interviews typically lasted approximately 10 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' permission and transcribed for analysis. Data were collected in September and October of 2011. A total of 40 interviews were conducted (27 public school administrators and 13 private school administrators). Public school administrators were primarily superintendents and private school administrators were typically principals (of elementary, middle, and high schools). To analyze responses, the evaluator conducted coding and recursive abstraction.

The following points summarize the main findings of this study:

- Most school administrators reported already having tobacco free policies in their schools or districts that complied with state law, although not all policies adhered to every recommendation outlined in the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative mailing.
- The mailing itself did not make an impression on the target audience. Most school administrators did not recall hearing about, seeing, or receiving it.
- Since 95% reported having a tobacco policy that met requirements, they were not interested in taking the time to make revisions to the policy.
- Instead of a paper mailing, a secure (i.e. not registered as “spam”) e-mail with links would have been preferred by many respondents.
- Public and private school administrators requested information and data that could be easily applied in the classroom and could be useful to teachers. Specifically, many administrators were unaware of the new dissolvable tobacco products and did not know whether or how those products would fit into their current school or district policy.
- Administrators agreed that statewide policy consistency is beneficial to schools, districts, and communities.
- Respondents indicated they would comply with state mandates and requirements regarding school tobacco policies.

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Study Implementation

Who conducted the study? The study was conducted by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). All research activities were approved by the UNI Institutional Review Board (IRB) to further ensure protection of the rights of human research participants.

Who funded the project? The study was funded by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (Tobacco Division) through contracts with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Communities Putting Prevention to Work Initiative (CPPW). The CPPW Initiative is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

What program was evaluated? The program evaluated was the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to promote the adoption of comprehensive and consistent tobacco-free school policies in districts across the state. As part of the initiative, informational packets were mailed to public and private school administrators in Iowa in the fall of 2010. Each packet contained a letter signed by the Directors of the Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa Department of Education, a fact sheet about youth tobacco use, model comprehensive policy language with a policy checklist, and an informational DVD including interviews with school administrators and students.

What was the primary purpose of the project? The purpose of the process evaluation project was to explore the perceptions of Iowa school administrators regarding school tobacco policies and informational mailings in general.

What data were used for this research? Qualitative, telephone-based interviews were conducted with public and private school administrators in Iowa. Administrators were selected at random from the contact list used in the mailing that was distributed in the fall of 2010. Recruitment, scheduling, and interviewing continued on a rolling basis until saturation was reached in the data. A ratio of approximately two-thirds public school administrators and one-third private school administrators was maintained to reflect the approximate distribution of the sample. Interviews typically lasted approximately 10 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' permission and transcribed for analysis.

When were the data collected? Data were collected in September and October of 2011.

How many interviews were completed? A total of 40 qualitative telephone-based interviews were conducted with public and private school administrators in Iowa (27 public school administrators and 13 private school administrators). Public school administrators were primarily superintendents and private school administrators were typically principals (of elementary, middle, and high schools).

How were the data analyzed? To analyze responses, the evaluator conducted coding and recursive abstraction. Codes are representations of major themes found in the interview

transcripts. Codes and themes were developed using the interview guide as a framework. The interview guide questions were used as primary themes, with other feedback grouped as general comments and analyzed further. Within each theme, the evaluator used a process of recursive abstraction to generate conclusions and summarize feedback. In this report, findings are organized using the major themes from the interview guide as the framework.

Were there any limitations to the study? One limitation of the study was the long delay between the mailing and the follow-up data collection. A full year passed between the mailing and the interviews. The delay may have made it more difficult for administrators to recall the mailing and the specific contents of the mailing. A shorter time interval between the mailing and the interviews may have been beneficial.

Background

The informational packet that was mailed to public and private school administrators contained four items: 1) a letter to the administrator from the directors of the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Department of Education; 2) an informational fact sheet about youth tobacco use; 3) a model policy and checklist; and 4) an informational DVD with school administrators and students sharing their perspectives on tobacco free school policies. For public schools, the mailing was sent primarily to school district superintendents. For private schools, the mailing was sent primarily to principals.

The letter from Directors Tom Newton (IDPH) and Kevin Fangman (DOE) explained the purpose of the mailing and provided information about the importance of comprehensive and consistent tobacco free school policies. The letter encouraged administrators to review the information in the packet and to evaluate their school's or district's tobacco policy.

The fact sheet contained information about the link between tobacco use and academic performance among youth. It also contained information about other negative consequences associated with tobacco use among youth such as links with other risk behaviors and reduced memory and attention span.

The model tobacco-free policy included in the packet presented the following example for administrators:

TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

School district facilities and grounds, including school vehicles, are off limits for tobacco use. This requirement extends to students, employees and visitors. This policy applies at all times, including school-sponsored and nonschool-sponsored events. Persons failing to abide by this request are required to extinguish their smoking material, dispose of the tobacco product or leave the school district premises immediately. It is the responsibility of the administration to enforce this policy.

In the same document, a checklist provided guidance “to ensure a strong tobacco-free policy.” Schools or districts with policies that include all components in the checklist are eligible to receive free outdoor signage from IDPH. The checklist included the following components:

- *Policy must extend to all types of tobacco use (not just smoking)*
- *Policy must extend to employees, students & visitors*
- *Policy must apply at all times, including school-sponsored & nonschool-sponsored events*
- *Policy must extend to school vehicles*
- *Policy must include steps to address violators*
- *Policy must determine an enforcing entity (e.g., “the administration”)*

The DVD contained interviews with students and school administrators about their experiences with tobacco in schools and their experiences instituting tobacco free policies in their schools and districts.

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Main Findings: Public School Administrators

Enhanced Tobacco Policies

All 27 of the public school administrators interviewed said their district had a comprehensive tobacco policy in place. All respondents said their policy included a) all tobacco products, including smokeless; b) all facilities and areas, including outdoor areas, parking lots, and vehicles; c) all employees, students, and visitors; and d) all hours of the day, even outside regular school hours. Most (22 of 27, 81%) public school respondents said that an enforcing entity and/or steps to address violators were explicitly stated in the policy. Regarding distribution and display of the policy, 24 respondents (89%) said the policy was posted via signage, 20 (74%) said the policy was distributed in student and teacher handbooks or board policies, and 10 said the policy was displayed on the district website. The majority of respondents (19 of 27, 70%) said they had not received any feedback about the policy while 8 respondents (30%) reported receiving some feedback. Type of feedback received was mixed, with about one-half reporting positive feedback and one-half reporting negative feedback.

Select quotes from public school administrators about school tobacco policies:

It falls along with the IASB recommendation and it basically says that school districts, facilities, campuses, school vehicles, shall be tobacco free. It extends to all employees and visitors of course. 24 hours a day, school sponsored events, non-school sponsored events, someone rents the building for usage they can't smoke here. We ask them to—not only that but it includes the smokeless tobacco.

Well when it first came out those that were bending the rules and trying to smoke behind the buildings or the employees that were going out to the parking lot gave me some negative feedback. That's been long enough ago. It's just the way that we do business now. Everything I'd say 10% negative—I'll take that back 20% negative, 80% positive at first and right now I don't get any feedback. It's just the way that it is.

What I've received from other people is that they appreciate not having to deal with the smell you know and when they walk outside the doors you know for ball games and all those kinds of things they just want people away from those areas and I do know people appreciate that.

Regarding alternative tobacco products such as orbs, strips, sticks, or snus, 12 of 27 (44%) public school respondents said that alternative tobacco products were included in their policy. An additional 12 respondents (44%) said they were not sure whether their policy included alternative tobacco products. Three respondents (11%) said their policy did not cover these products.

Select quotes from public school administrators about alternative tobacco products:

They would be [included in the policy] but I think to be honest with you it might be good to have an informational campaign to alert people in general and maybe school officials in particular about you know some of these new ways to try and you know skirt the system or whatever.

You know I know a little bit about what you're talking about. It would probably be a hard thing to see or notice. I have not seen or noticed anything like that if we did we would follow the policy in that case.

Public administrators almost unanimously reported that consistency of tobacco policies across Iowa schools is important (24 of 27, 89%). The most commonly cited reasons were that consistency a) leads to easier enforcement (especially at athletic and extracurricular activities where visitors come to the schools), b) reduces confusion for the public by creating uniform expectations, c) improves general wellness of the public, and d) keeps schools in accordance with the law.

Select quotes from public school administrators about consistency of school tobacco policies:

Oh boy that's almost a loaded question. You know I don't like to tell other districts what to do but obviously a policy that's consistent across districts doesn't lead to confusion when I have folks from other school districts coming here and if our policy is more strict having to deal with that. I think it's important that the base is consistent.

We have so many different folks that are in lots of different schools whether they be spectators or athletic events or you know people that work for the AEA and I think for the sake of those folks a certain level of consistency is important so they have a real firm understanding that no school is you know allowing tobacco products.

Well I really don't control what happens in other people's school districts so I really don't care. I think it's pretty widely known that nobody can smoke here and that's what I'm concerned about.

The majority of public school respondents (18 of 27, 67%) said they had heard of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative, but 8 (30%) had not. Only 6 respondents (22%) said they recalled hearing anything specific about making tobacco free school policies more comprehensive or stronger.

Select quote from a public school administrator about enhancing school tobacco policies:

A few years ago it was more or less a mandate that came out from the state that all school districts needed to be, by I think it was 2008, by July 1 all schools so I'm not sure as to the question. This has been in the books for some time either 2 or 3 years.

Impressions of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative Mailing

Among the 27 public school administrators interviewed, 9 (33%) recalled receiving or seeing the packet mailed to them as part of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. Of these, only 2 recalled reading the information and none recalled watching the DVD. The majority of public school respondents (18 of 27, 67%) did not recall hearing about, receiving, or seeing the mailing. Some public school administrators said that other individuals in the district (such as a nurse, health educator, or a physical education teacher) would be more likely to deal with youth tobacco use issues.

Select quotes from public school administrators about receiving the mailing:

Well you know I vaguely remember it but I didn't pay much attention to it because we have pretty much everything in place.

Anything to do with you know working with high school kids we do have a school nurse. In fact she was originally hired with our settlement and so she was part of that and we just kept her on but yeah she's the one that really got things rolling in the district.

It depends. I have an after school program which also receives some federal funding through smoking cessation programs. And so that person would get it as well as my curriculum person simply because it would filter into the health and wellness curriculum in our district.

Public school administrators were mixed in their responses regarding sources of information about youth tobacco use and tobacco free school policies. About one-half (13 of 27) said hearing from their peers and colleagues around the state about their policy experiences would be helpful, but the other half (14 respondents) said it would not be helpful. Public school respondents were also evenly divided regarding whether student perspectives on the issue would be helpful. Other groups mentioned by public school administrators as potentially useful sources of information were parents, other community members, and school boards.

Select quote from a public school administrator about sources of information:

You know [student input is] very valuable but again we just have a very simple cut and dry policy around here for student, staff, community member, it's the same policy—no tobacco. Obviously we have concerns about trying to educate kids beyond just having rules that say no you can't do it and try to get them to lead healthy lifestyles which is you know a different issue than what you're talking about with policy but you know that input and their influence is important obviously but with that said when it comes down to it the law is the law, the policy is the policy and you know if someone disagrees right now they have the right to disagree but they don't have the right to break the policy.

Administrators were asked whether a letter signed by the directors of the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Education carried much significance. Respondents were evenly divided between those who said it carried some significance, it carried no special significance, and the significance would depend on the information in the letter. Slightly less than one-half of the public school respondents (12 of 27, 44%) said they were receiving enough information regarding youth tobacco use and tobacco free policies. The most commonly requested additional types of information were trend data on youth tobacco use and hearing from colleagues about their experiences.

Select quotes from public school administrators regarding additional information:

I'm probably more interested in getting the information in kid's hands about living healthy lifestyles, what tobacco does to you, the harms, the dangers, and that stuff. Again maybe a bit different topic than policies. As far as policy goes I don't know how much more you can refine a policy than to say tobacco shall be off limits.

I think that always helps you know when someone in that kind of position makes a statement I think it helps give credence to what we're doing.

I think it's important for us to have trend data as far as you know students smoking more or smoking less or using tobacco products more, using tobacco products less, health risks that are associated with tobacco products and probably resources to help people quit should they start to use those products. I think those would be 3 key areas of information.

Oh I think it's important to always have that as a component of it but I think there may be more powerful things. I mean I think certain testimonials. I remember [name deleted] did a spot before he died and after he died of lung cancer and he said now that I'm gone you know I want you to remember this. Don't smoke. You know things like that. I remember my father-in-law died in his 50s from lung cancer and you know he regretted having smoked cigarettes you know I mean that personal connection. If there's a way to kind of make a personal connection and [name deleted] was not really personal but to me that was more compelling and more touching than a letter from the head of a department somewhere.

Everybody knows that public places are supposed to be tobacco free. I don't know how much more we need to, you know, it needs to go from there.

Informational Mailings – General

Responses from public school administrators varied regarding the frequency with which they receive informational mailings about similar topics. Seven (26%) said they received such mailings weekly or daily, 7 (26%) said monthly, 6 (22%) said a few times per year, and 5 (18%) were not sure. E-mail was the most commonly reported preferred mode of contact (11 of 27, 41%), and mailings/packets was the second most commonly preferred mode (6 of 27, 22%). Some public school administrators noted that they were most likely to re-evaluate their policy if there was a mandate or requirement at the state level.

Select quotes from public school administrators regarding general informational mailings:

Certainly mandates or requirements get your attention.

I think just things that are ready to be copied and they're not copyrighted and you know that you can just go ahead and copy and send home with students or put in your district newsletter, put in the newspaper, you know just things like that you can keep the awareness level up.

I think materials that come to me electronically that are not spam that they identify a list and they come through my regular e-mail. I read those.

I think if there were some model programs that had a dramatic impact on students, hearing about those model policies or model programs would be effective.

I don't pay a lot of attention to them and the reason that is, is because we have a tobacco free policy in effect. We've certainly seen a decrease in the use of tobacco you know around here and on campus and you know young people using tobacco so.

And you know really if they speak to us—the school board association—SCI or something like that then I look at it because I think they pre-filtered it.

Main Findings: Private School Administrators

Enhanced Tobacco Policies

Among the 13 private school administrators interviewed for this study, 2 (15%) reported that their schools did not have a tobacco policy of any kind in place. Of the 11 (85%) with a tobacco policy, all included a) all tobacco products, including smokeless and b) all facilities and areas, including outdoor areas, parking lots, and vehicles. Ten (91%) policies included a) all employees, students, and visitors, and d) all hours of the day, even outside regular school hours. About one-half (5) of the 11 schools with a policy in place specifically included an enforcing entity while the other one-half (6) did not. Most private school respondents reported not having received any feedback, positive or negative, about their school tobacco policies.

Select quotes from private school administrators about tobacco policies:

[I didn't watch it because] I guess in my experience here I haven't had to deal with a lot of students smoking. I've had to deal with some tobacco use but to this point it hasn't been a major issue to my knowledge anyway.

We do not allow any tobacco on our campus whatsoever. Students, faculty, visitors—we have signs posted throughout the school and of course any of our students that are observed using tobacco we have specific rules and regulations and consequences for the use of tobacco.

Eight of the 13 (62%) private school respondents said they had heard of new and alternative tobacco products. Those who had heard of alternative tobacco products were divided regarding whether or not those products were included in their school tobacco policy.

Select quotes from private school administrators about alternative tobacco products:

Now you know you mentioned some of those smokeless products that I'm not real familiar with but I guess I wouldn't know. I probably couldn't tell the difference between a tic tac and one of those things.

I guess I'd have to go look at the wording. I think our policy is tobacco and tobacco products so if these would be considered tobacco products than yes they would fall in our policy. They're not—I would say they're not specifically mentioned. Let me just find my handbook here. Our handbook refers to—and this is what would be in our student handbook. Just refers to I think it's tobacco or tobacco products. Yeah so it's more general in nature.

Private school respondents almost uniformly reported that consistency of tobacco policies across Iowa schools is important (12 of 13, 92%). The most common reasons for this were to set a standard across the state, especially for athletic or extracurricular events and to make enforcement easier.

Select quotes from private school administrators about consistency of tobacco policies:

I think it's very helpful if they are. If people know that once they're on school grounds they should not be using tobacco and if that's the policy everywhere I think that is very helpful.

Well I think it's important but we're a K-6 program and so the only people that would be staff and there are no staff I don't think there's been a staff smoker since I've been here since '99.

Eight of the 13 (62%) private school respondents said they had heard of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative, but many had not heard anything specific about making tobacco policies in schools more comprehensive, stronger, or more consistent.

Select quote from a private school administrator about enhancing school tobacco policies:

Yes. I had—well our health teacher had talked to me about this. She was taking a class where this came up and she was wondering what our specific policy was so I talked with her last summer and then someone from the County Department of Health also contacted me about our tobacco policy just recently and I think that was in effort to find out what the policies are in the county schools.

Impressions of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative Mailing

One-third (4 of 13) private school respondents said they remembered the informational packet and only 1 of these 4 recalled watching the DVD. All four of those who recalled the informational materials said they were helpful. Some respondents said that other individuals in the district (such as a nurse, health educator, or a physical education teacher) would be more likely to deal with youth tobacco use issues.

Select quotes from private school administrators about receiving the mailing:

I don't [recall receiving the mailing] and if I did I'm assuming I forwarded it either to our P.E. teacher or our nurse.

I will delegate and give to our P.E. teacher and this year we have began a health component. She's not only teaching P.E. but she also teaches our health class so we do it on rotation and actually she just was doing something about tobacco use with the 6th graders and peer pressure I guess and alcohol and tobacco. The reason why we did the health component is because of the Iowa Core Curriculum which came from the D.E. because we got a flyer from public health.

All but 2 of the 13 private school respondents (85%) said it would be helpful to hear from colleagues about their experiences with tobacco policies, and they were especially interested in hearing about their experiences with enforcement and implementation experiences. Student perspectives were not reported to be useful for this particular topic. Other groups mentioned by private school administrators as potentially useful sources of information were parents, other community members, police, and school boards.

Select quote from private school administrators about sources of information:

I think when you're implementing the policy it's important to see the consequences of you know tobacco use but I think when you're implementing it or sharing it with others and especially children I'd have them see real life examples of what could happen if you smoke or chew.

I think getting parents involved is always a good thing. We can please the kids here while we're at school but it's going to be up to the parents to make sure they're hopefully giving the same message when they're at home as well.

Private school administrators were also asked whether a letter signed by the directors of the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Education carried much significance. Respondents were evenly divided between those who said it carried some significance, it carried no special significance, and the significance would depend on the information in the letter. The most commonly requested additional types of information were data on the prevalence of youth tobacco use, information about new tobacco products, and information on implementation in other schools.

Select quotes from private school administrators regarding additional information:

Yeah I think that would be good you know hearing about how they're trying to keep [new tobacco products] out of the schools, how they identify them. I would find that helpful.

Well it carries a lot of significance but if it's informational then I read it and put it away. If it's something I have to respond to than I keep it on the front burner.

I think if the Department of Education would mandate I think that would make schools follow a certain procedure or policy.

Informational Mailings – General

The frequency of informational mailings reported by private school respondents varied from weekly to never. Most private school respondents (9 of 13, 69%) said they received information monthly or less often. E-mail was the preferred method of contact or communication, reported by about one-half (6 of 13) of private school respondents. Classroom materials or “kid-friendly” materials were the most frequently mentioned type of information that should be including in such mailings. Also mentioned as potentially useful information were example policies and data on effects of or relevance of tobacco in schools. In general, private school respondents said that informational mailings need to be more memorable.

Select quotes from public school administrators regarding general informational mailings:

Sending an e-mail with a link to it. That would have the video or a video linked to it is something that—that’s a way that I would probably have watched it. Or there would have been a better chance that I would have watched it that way.

Yeah mailings are probably the least useful. E-mailing second least useful. Phone call or Facebook page works the best.

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Summary and Conclusions

Public and private school administrators interviewed as part of this study had very similar responses regarding school tobacco policies, the Tobacco Free Schools informational campaign, and informational mailings in general. Response frequencies for public and private respondents can be seen in Table 1. All but 2 of the 40 respondents (95%) said their school or district already had a tobacco policy in place that included most of the components recommended by the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. However, a few respondents said their policies did not specify enforcing entities or steps to address violators.

Awareness of new and alternative forms of tobacco such as orbs, strips, sticks, or snus was limited. Even the few respondents who had heard of these products were unsure of whether they would be able to identify them in use. Administrators were most aware of the more “visible” types of tobacco use such as cigarette smoking and use of chew or spit tobacco, and discussed these types of products in relation to their school or district tobacco-free policy. In some cases, the process evaluation interviews piqued respondents’ interest about these products. When asked about additional information that might be helpful, several respondents indicated that they would like more information about new and alternative tobacco products.

The majority of respondents (90%) said that it is important for tobacco free school policies to be consistent across the state. Consistency makes enforcement easier and reduces confusion when extracurricular activities and sporting events bring visitors to the school. Respondents were interested in hearing from their colleagues and peers around the state regarding their experiences with enforcement and implementation of a tobacco policy, but not regarding the need for a tobacco policy. Since most respondents said their school or district had a tobacco policy that complied with state law, they were more interested in receiving information about how to overcome implementation challenges than about evaluating the contents of their policy.

Only one-third of respondents (33%, or 13 of 40) said they recalled receiving, seeing, or hearing about the mailing sent by the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. Among those that did recall the mailing, only a small number recalled the contents and only 1 respondent said they watched the DVD. A few of the respondents who recalled the mailing said they passed it along to another person in the school or district who deals with health issues more directly, but most simply did not recall the mailing. The extent to which the lapse in time from the mailing (fall 2010) to the interviews (fall 2011) may, at least in part, be a potential factor in the low recall rate among administrators.

The preferred method of contact reported by administrators was e-mail. Respondents said that e-mails from trusted sources that contained informational links would be an efficient way of reaching them. Being able to simply point and click for the information was, for some respondents, preferable to the multiple steps involved in opening and watching a DVD. Regular mail was the second most commonly preferred way of receiving information.

To summarize, four primary conclusions were drawn from the results of this process evaluation:

- Most school administrators reported already having tobacco free policies in their schools or districts that complied with state law, although not all policies adhered to every recommendation outlined in the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative mailing.
- The mailing itself did not make an impression on the target audience. Most school administrators did not recall hearing about, seeing, or receiving it. In addition, since 95% reported having a tobacco policy that met requirements, they were not interested in taking the time to make revisions to the policy.
- Instead of a paper mailing, a secure (i.e. not registered as “spam”) e-mail with links may have been a more effective method of communication information to the target audience. In addition, the information sent to administrators was not perceived to be directly relevant to their needs. Public and private school administrators requested information and data that could be easily applied in the classroom and could be useful to teachers.
- Administrators agreed that statewide policy consistency is beneficial to schools, districts, and communities. Respondents indicated they would comply with state mandates and requirements regarding school tobacco policies, but in general did not see a need for evaluating their own policies.

Table 1: Administrator responses

	<i>Public</i>		<i>Private</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Have a tobacco policy	27	100	11	85	38	95
Among those with a policy:						
Includes all tobacco products	27	100	11	100	38	100
Includes all buildings/grounds	27	100	11	100	38	100
Includes all employees/students/visitors	27	100	10	91	37	97
Applies outside regular school hours	27	100	10	91	37	97
Includes enforcing entity and steps to address violators	22	81	5	45	27	71
Distribution:						
Posted	24	89	5	45	29	76
Handbooks	20	74	9	82	29	76
Online	10	37	0	--	10	25
Heard of alternative products	18	67	8	62	26	65
Statewide policy consistency is important	24	89	12	92	36	90
Heard of TFSI specifically	18	67	8	62	26	65
Recalled mailing	9	33	4	31	13	33
Watched DVD	0	--	1	8	1	3
Helpful to hear from colleagues	13	48	10	77	23	58
Helpful to hear student perspectives	14	52	5	38	19	48

Appendix

Tobacco Free Schools Interview Guide

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the University of Northern Iowa. May I speak with (NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR)?

*If available, go to **INTRO***

If unavailable, schedule a time for a call-back

INTRO

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the University of Northern Iowa Center for Social and Behavioral Research. We are conducting an independent evaluation of an informational campaign sent to school administrators by the Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. Informational materials about tobacco free policies were sent to your office last fall. Would you be willing to answer a few questions over the phone about the mailing and about tobacco policies in schools? This could be done now or we can schedule a more convenient time to talk.

****If respondent interrupts with "I never received that," continue with:*

We'd also like to ask about tobacco free policies in Iowa schools. Do you have a few minutes to answer questions about your school's policy?

*If available now, continue to **CONSENT***

If available at a later time, schedule time to call back

CONSENT

We are conducting interviews to learn about the reach and efficiency of an informational campaign conducted by the Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. The Tobacco Free Schools Initiative distributed informational materials about school tobacco policies to public and private school administrators in Iowa. For most people it takes 15 minutes or less. All responses will be audio recorded and transcribed. You are free to end your participation at any time or skip any questions if you choose. There are no foreseeable risks to your participation, nor are there any direct benefits to you. Any information you provide will be confidential. If you have any questions about the program or this evaluation, I will provide a name and telephone number to call to get more information.

INTERVIEW

Note to interviewers: *If the respondent is a SUPERINTENDENT, please use the word "district" when given the option. If the respondent is a PRINCIPAL, please use the word "school" instead.*

Enhanced tobacco policies:

I'll begin by asking a few questions about the tobacco policy currently in place in your (district / school).

1. Please describe the tobacco policy in your (district / school).
 - a. What types of tobacco products are covered in the policy?

- b. What school facilities or areas are included in your policy (ask about outdoor areas, parking lots, and vehicles if not specifically mentioned)?
 - c. Who is covered by the policy? For example, employees, students, and visitors?
 - d. Does the policy apply outside of regular school hours?
 - e. Does the policy include an enforcing entity and/or steps to address violators?
 - f. How is the policy distributed, is it printed or posted?
 - g. Have you received any feedback, positive or negative, about the policy?
2. Have you heard of new or alternative types of tobacco products such as smokeless and dissolvable products? These include orbs (similar in size to Tic Tacs), strips (like a breath freshener strip), sticks (look like toothpicks), or snus (pouches of tobacco that do not require spitting). Are these products included in your tobacco policy?
 3. How important do you think it is for tobacco free school policies to be consistent across the state? Why do you say that?
 4. Have you heard of the Tobacco Free Schools Initiative? Do you recall hearing anything about making tobacco-free policies in schools more comprehensive, stronger, or more consistent?

Impressions of the mailing:

5. An informational packet was mailed to your office last fall about the Iowa Tobacco Free Schools Initiative. It contained a letter from the directors of IDPH and the Department of Education, a fact sheet about tobacco use among youth, information about tobacco-free policies, and a DVD. Do you recall receiving or hearing about a mailing such as this?
 - a. *If no:* Is there a person in your (district / school) other than yourself who is designated to deal with these types of issues? (*If no, skip to i3 and then ii3*)
 - b. *If yes:*
 - i. Do you recall watching the DVD after you received it?
 1. *If yes:*

What were your impressions of the DVD? What were your impressions of the youth, administrators, and teachers in the video? Did the video motivate you to think about the tobacco policies at your school? Is there anyone in addition to students and administrators that you would have liked to see represented in the video? (*Skip to 3 – all respondents*)

2. *If no:* Do you recall why not? (*Continue to 3 – all respondents*)
3. *All respondents, including those who aren't sure, express doubt, or can't remember:*

How helpful do you think it is to hear from your colleagues about their experiences with tobacco-free policies? What specific information would you want to hear from them? How valuable are student perspectives when you consider tobacco-free policies? What specific information would you want to hear from them? Who else would you want to hear from on this issue?

- ii. In the same packet as the DVD, there was a letter from IDPH and DOE, a fact sheet, and a checklist of elements to include in comprehensive tobacco-free policies. Do you remember these materials?

1. *If yes:*

Was the information useful? Was the information new to you? How easy or difficult were the written materials to read and understand? (*Skip to 3 – all respondents*)

2. *If no: Why not? (Continue to 3 – all respondents)*

3. *All respondents, including those who aren't sure, express doubt, or can't remember:*

How much significance does a letter from the directors of IDPH and the Department of Education carry? How much information about tobacco use among youth do you feel you or your colleagues need? What additional information would be useful to you when considering tobacco-free policies?

Informational mailings:

6. How often do you receive informational materials regarding health issues such as these? What have you found to be the most effective ways of getting your attention? What should be included in such materials to make them useful for you?

THANK YOU –

That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Contact information:

Tobacco Free Schools: Maggie O'Rourke (515) 758-3006

Evaluation: Disa Cornish (319) 273-2105

Questions about rights as human participant go to the UNI IRB office: (319) 273-3217

Leaving a message with a secretary or other staff:

Please have (NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR) call Disa Cornish at UNI at (319) 273-2105 to talk about tobacco free policies in Iowa schools.

Leaving a message on an answering machine or voicemail system:

My name is _____ and I am calling from the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at UNI. We are working with the Iowa Department of Public Health and would like to ask you a few questions about tobacco free policies in Iowa schools. Please call Disa Cornish at (319) 273-2105 at your earliest convenience.