

Hello! My name is Maddy Barron. I am a Quest Sophomore at Millikan High School and I am here to talk about my experiences with vaping.

Millikan is an amazing school. We have knock-out spirit, academics, and athletics, and the teachers are wonderful. But despite all of these positive characteristics, vaping is still an issue at my high school.

My first encounter with vaping at Millikan occurred late in my eighth grade year, when I wasn't even attending yet. A friend of mine posted various screenshots of an email- that seemed to be from an authoritative figure at Millikan- on her Instagram account. The emails all stated relatively similar messages: "Students caught vaping on any part of the campus will receive an immediate suspension, a meeting with your parents, and possible police involvement." Up until that point, I was unaware that that is what high school was going to be like.

When I first got to Millikan, I began to observe my surroundings. When I observed the classrooms, I saw four or five "Anti Vaping" posters in each room. When I observed the teachers, I saw that in every syllabus there had the same quote- "Vaping or the use of any other drugs will not be tolerated in this classroom. This will result in a referral and a conference with your parents." And when I observed the older students, and even some of my peers, I saw that they tried to find loopholes; I saw that they thought it was cool; I saw that there was a designated bathroom that they all did it in; I saw that there was even a vape and smoke shop, called Vaporland, right around the corner from my school. But most of all, I saw that they thought it was funny. In my freshman year, I was offered three or four times to take a hit (to which I politely declined). They offered me different flavors like cotton candy, grape, Unicorn poop and Swedish fish. We had a total of five false fire drills because the smoke from smoking in the bathrooms set off the alarms, and many of my peers were even vaping in the classroom, during passing period, and as soon as school was out.

This year, my sophomore year, teachers have been more proactive about the cause. Thus far, we have had in-classroom discussions based off of informational videos about vaping. One of the videos told us the near-death story of a girl, not much older than us, who's lungs failed due to vaping. I hope that her story opens my peers' eyes and shows them that vaping isn't just a "joke", and that it is a very real and dangerous habit. My teachers are also very encouraging about seeking help, which I am hoping helps to stop the growing problem at Millikan.

I hope by staying informed and making the right decisions, my school along with thousands of others can combat vaping. Thanks!