



Clark Public Schools

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Edward Grande
Superintendent of Schools

Steven Kaelblein
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

On November 3, 2020, New Jerseyans faced a monumental choice. Apart from the various Federal, State, and local elections conducted that day, we citizens also decided, by way of a **constitutional amendment**, to allow recreational purchase and use of marijuana and marijuana products by those aged 21 and above.

As a result, the New Jersey Constitution will be amended to read, in part, the following:

The growth, cultivation, processing, manufacturing, preparing, packaging, transferring, and retail purchasing and consumption of cannabis, or products created from or which include cannabis, by persons 21 years of age or older, and not by persons under 21 years of age, shall be lawful and subject to regulation by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission created by P.L.2019, c.153 (C.24:6I-5.1 et al.), or any successor to that commission. [1]

Of particular concern in this amendment is the language that reads, “retail purchasing and consumption of cannabis, or **products created from or which include cannabis**” (emphasis added). I fear that too many people view marijuana as a harmless drug, hanging on to the old stereotype that pot is simply used at parties. Nothing could be further from the truth. Today, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)--the psychoactive chemical in marijuana--is infused into sodas, juices, coffee, tea, gum, candy, bread products, and more. In short, as a result of legalization, THC may very well reside in every cabinet in your kitchen. And, today’s THC carries much higher potencies than the 5-10% of the 1980s and 1990s. For example, THC oil—the product favored by teens who vape—is routinely labeled as having THC concentrations above 70% and as high as 90-95%. [2] In describing THC oil, one pro-THC website states that “liquid THC is basically an ultra-concentrated form of marijuana that has an absurdly high THC content. While typical marijuana strains have a THC content anywhere between 12-35%, most ‘normal’ varieties of liquid pot have upwards of 70% THC content – more than enough to get you higher than you’ve ever been in your life.” [3]

Thus, accessibility and potency make marijuana far more dangerous in 2020 than it was in “the good old days” when pot smoking was viewed by many as a teenage right-of-passage.

Arguments have been made that adults aged 21 and above ought to be allowed to use marijuana recreationally in the same way they use alcohol. This reasoning, however, ignores the effect that legalized cannabis will have on our youth. By far, alcohol is the drug most used by New Jersey’s adolescents; marijuana trails significantly behind. Why? Quite simply, teens will follow the lead provided by adults and society at large. Since it is legal, alcohol is the dominant drug of choice among teens. Most adolescents avoided THC because it was **illegal**. Now, we have potentially opened the door for more and more adolescents to view marijuana as ripe for experimentation and use. As we embark upon a new State-level public policy, we are encouraging parents



and guardians to be extra vigilant in recognizing the danger of their children's potential consumption of marijuana or THC products.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Kaelblein

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Notes

1. [https://ballotpedia.org/New_Jersey_Public_Question_1,_Marijuana_Legalization_Amendment_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/New_Jersey_Public_Question_1,_Marijuana_Legalization_Amendment_(2020))
2. <https://www.cannabis-nb.com/01/all/menu/vape-pens--cartridges/>
3. <https://wayofleaf.com/blog/how-high-can-you-get-on-weed>