



Oklahoma State Department of Health
 Creating a State of Health



August 1, 2015

Dear INSERT NAME:

Oklahoma has achieved a significant milestone for the health of our children. House Bill 1685, also known as the 24/7 Tobacco-Free Schools Act, will go into effect August 20, 2015 and require all public and private schools to be tobacco-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is an important measure to enhance students' learning environments and to protect their health by reducing tobacco use among youth.

Although the previous law requires public schools to be tobacco-free during operating hours, the new law prohibits the use of tobacco in any form, by anyone, at any place and any time while on school grounds or in school vehicles and during any school sponsored functions held on or off campus.

The majority of Oklahoma's schools were pioneers in school health and made early decisions to adopt policies that support healthy schools. We applaud you for leading the way in protecting Oklahoma's youth and expect this new law to support you in those efforts.

We must keep up the momentum. Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in Oklahoma and the U.S., killing more people than alcohol, drug abuse, homicide, suicide, AIDS, and car crashes COMBINED; and it is estimated that over 88,000 Oklahoma kids alive today will eventually die prematurely from smoking. Implementation of this law will save lives.

To help you implement the new law, information about the specifics of the 24/7 Tobacco-Free School Act and your respective Department of Education liaison are provided in the *Red Banner Booklet* on page 101. This information will assist you in assessing your current school policy and making adjustments as needed to ensure it includes all details as stated in the law, such as clearly defined terminology, additional e-cigarette and vapor product restrictions, and enforcement guidelines. Staff with the Oklahoma State Department of Health are also available to provide support, guidance, and resources. You may reach the OSDH Center for the Advancement of Wellness at Center@health.ok.gov.

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 Secretary of Health
 and Human Services

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We thank you for your dedication to Oklahoma's children. Your continuous efforts to "Shape the Future" of Oklahoma's next generation by providing an optimal learning environment are greatly appreciated and signify the importance of growing healthy minds and bodies together in order for our children to reach their full potential. We are grateful for your partnership in health.

Best Regards,



Joy Hofmeister

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oklahoma State Department of Education



Terry L. Cline, Ph.D.

Commissioner of Health & Secretary of Health and Human Services



Tracey Strader, M.S.W.

Executive Director, Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust

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