

SHADY POINT SCHOOL ADOPTS TOBACCO POLICY

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The Shady Point School Board voted in March to adopt a tobacco-free school policy, Tobacco-Free LeFlore County Coordinator Benjamin "B.J." Barnes announced by email Monday.

"Tobacco use has always been a problem in schools. We wanted to take steps to protect our students from its harmful effects 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Shady Point Superintendent Bruce Gillham said.

He thanked the organization for bringing the issue to school administrators' attention, and noted that the organization's help was instrumental in developing a tobacco-free policy for the district.

According to Barnes, tobacco kills more Oklahomans than alcohol, vehicle accidents, AIDS, suicides, murders and illegal drugs combined.

He said a major goal of the organization is for all 17 of LeFlore County's school districts to adopt a tobacco-free policy.

Organization Chairwoman Marlene Chester said she's proud of Shady Point Public Schools and its administrators' actions for students' well-being.

Citing health reasons, Carl Albert State College Student Government Association officers approached CASC regents in January with their desire to make the campus smoke-free as of January 2012. The students said smoking is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death, costing more than 6,000 lives and almost \$2.9 billion each year

In March, the regents asked the student association to also poll faculty and staff on the issue.

According to the organization's Facebook page, the Howe School has also adopted a tobacco-free policy.

Tobacco-Free LeFlore County is a grantee of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, and is a program of the LeFlore County Coalition for Healthy Living and LeFlore County Youth Services.

According to the announcement, the Tobacco-Free organization works with schools, municipalities and businesses to decrease the use of tobacco.