Wallace Community
College Selma

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# WCCS Students Examine Why Young People Vape and Where to Find Help Quitting




Leigh Taylor Akins speaks with Wallace Community College Selma students during the November 16 Escape Vapes session.

Selma, Ala. - Why do some young people vape? That question appeared on the screen as Leigh Taylor Akins of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System met with Wallace Community College Selma students on November 16, 2026.

The noon Escape Vapes session in HSTC 105 brought first-time freshmen and returning students into a conversation about what goes into an e-cigarette, how companies market vapes to young people, and how nicotine can affect both physical and mental health.

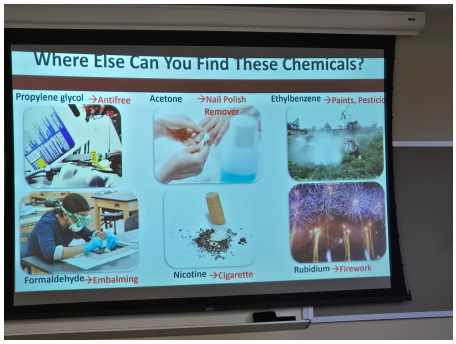
Akins works in family and child development and serves Dallas County and other communities across the Black Belt from the Marengo County Extension Office in Linden. Students who missed her visit can read a guide she co-authored for Alabama Extension, Vaping and E-Cigarettes: What Are the Risks?

## What's in a vape?

An e-cigarette heats liquid into an aerosol that travels into the lungs. A fruit flavor can make a vape appealing, but the aerosol can carry nicotine, tiny particles, and flavoring chemicals. Even a nicotine-free vape can expose the lungs to substances that irritate the airways, according to Alabama Extension.




Akins asks students to consider what draws young people to vaping.




A presentation slide shows other uses for chemicals discussed during the session.

## Why a vape can start to feel like stress relief?

Nicotine can make it harder for a developing brain to manage attention, learning, and mood. As nicotine wears off, someone who vapes regularly may feel irritable, anxious, or distracted. Reaching for a vape can briefly ease withdrawal while leaving the original source of stress in place, Alabama Extension explains.



Akins leads the classroom discussion.



WCCS students listen during the noon program.

## Where students can get help?

Students ready to quit vaping can get free, confidential coaching through the Alabama Tobacco Quitline. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or text READY to 21586 to enroll. Students ages 13 to 17 can text VAPEFREE to 873373 for free support through Live Vape Free.

For Escape Vapes materials or information about a local workshop, contact the Dallas County Extension Office at 334-875-3200 or visit 429 Lauderdale St. in Selma.