Tulare County Office of Education
Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools
news gallery week
October 14, 2026

TCOE hosts first Cybersecurity Conference



On Tuesday, TCOE Information Systems (IS) department hosted its first-ever Cybersecurity Conference with over 200 attendees from Tulare County, as well as county offices of education in Kern, Kings, and Fresno counties.

The event was attended by school IT professionals and featured breakout sessions covering several cybersecurity topics, including phishing awareness, school network security and resilience, K-12 breach case studies, defensive playbooks, and AI in the classroom.

“Through the dedicated efforts of the entire Information Systems department, the conference was highly successful in bringing together members of the K–12 community and cybersecurity industry experts,” said Jordan Davis, IS systems administrator. “The event provided a valuable opportunity to support our districts while delivering meaningful professional development for technology staff at all levels. Overall, the conference enhanced attendees’ understanding of the cybersecurity threats facing K–12 education and highlighted best practices for safeguarding our students and their data.”

Vendors in attendance were Red Herring, SecureW2, Department of Homeland Security, BreadCrumb Cybersecurity, AMS.net|MGT, Go Guardian, Managed Methods, Palo Alto Networks, Fortinet, Cisco, Apple, K-12-CENIC, CrowdStrike, Valley Expetec, Center for Internet Security, MS-ISAC, CDW, Trend Micro, and NTP.

Special thanks to the event sponsors: BreadCrumb Cybersecurity, AMS.net|MGT, SecureW2, Fortinet, HPE, BEARCloud, CrowdStrike, Elevate Global IT, Valley Expetec, Vizor, and Cisco.

CHOICES Prevention Program awarded $750,000 state grant for youth tobacco and vaping prevention



TCOE's CHOICES Prevention Program was awarded the 2026–2029 Tobacco-Use Prevention and Youth Engagement (TPYE) Grant by the California Department of Education. CHOICES' proposal was selected from over 100 competitive applications across California, making it one of just 24 programs funded statewide in this grant cycle.

Through this three-year, $750,000 award, CHOICES will serve as the lead for a consortium of 20 school districts, bringing evidence-informed tobacco, vaping, and nicotine prevention education to more than 41,000 middle and high school students across Tulare County.

The 2026–2029 initiative focuses heavily on peer-to-peer leadership and student-led awareness. CHOICES prevention specialists will partner with campus leadership groups, such as ASB, to train student leaders using Stanford University's "You and Me, Together Vape-Free" curriculum. Equipped with accurate science, refusal strategies, and cessation resources like *Kick It California*, these student ambassadors will design and deliver customized, school-wide prevention campaigns tailored to their own campus cultures.

"By empowering students to take the lead, we are leveraging positive peer influence to transform campus norms around vaping and tobacco," said Jeff Lynch, CHOICES Prevention Program manager. "When youth drive the conversation, the message resonates far more deeply with their peers."

In addition to campus-based campaigns, the grant will support CHOICES' long-standing county-wide events, including the annual Anti-Tobacco & Marijuana Challenge Bowl for sixth- and seventh-grade students, and the Soapbox Challenge/Lip Sync competition.

Participating Consortium School Districts: Alta Vista Elementary, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified, Ducor Union Elementary, Earlimart Elementary, Exeter Unified, Farmersville Unified, Monson-Sultana Joint Union Elementary, Palo Verde Union Elementary, Pixley Union Elementary, Porterville Unified, Richgrove Elementary, Saucelito Elementary, Tipton Elementary, Traver Joint Elementary, Tulare City Elementary, Tulare Joint Union High, TCOE Alternative Education, Visalia Unified, Waukena Joint Union Elementary, and Woodlake Unified schools districts.

To learn more about TCOE's CHOICES Prevention Program, visit tcoe.org/CHOICES.

Photo above:

~ The annual CHOICES Anti-Tobacco & Marijuana Challenge Bowl for sixth- and seventh-grade students will be one of the events supported through the Tobacco-Use Prevention and Youth Engagement Grant.

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