

Protect What's Next Challenge Fact Sheet

About the *Protect What's Next* Challenge

- The official *Protect What's Next* Challenge ran from February 1 - February 28, 2017.
- The purpose of this challenge was to encourage students to prioritize personal goals over retail marijuana use and was developed based on youth's belief that using retail marijuana before age 21 could get in the way of achieving their goals.
- In mid-January, every free-standing middle school serving only sixth through ninth graders across Colorado received a free *Protect What's Next* Challenge kit. The kit contained everything a school could need to implement the Challenge Month. Materials included:
 - Posters and mirror clings to place throughout the school to promote the Challenge and encourage participation
 - Challenge Cards for every student. Each Challenge Card featured three challenges a student could choose to complete.
 - Digital files of additional promotional materials
 - Instructions on how to implement the Challenge Month
- Each participating school and its students competed against other participating middle schools of similar size by completing quick, unique challenges throughout the month as a reminder of what it's like to set and accomplish goals.
- Some challenges were as simple as introducing yourself to five new people that week. Others were sillier like starting a flash mob in the cafeteria or altruistic like volunteering at a food bank.
- Students were encouraged to photograph or film themselves completing challenges and then upload the files to Instagram or privately on www.PWNchallenge.com. This allowed CDPHE to track how many challenges were completed at each school.
- Students who completed the challenges had the opportunity to win individual prizes from their schools.
- Four schools that had the highest student participation as a percentage of their student enrollment each won a \$10,000 prize to use to improve their schools. Schools were tiered in the following categories based on their student enrollment: under 250 students, 250-499 students, 500-749 students, and 750+ students. One school from each tier won.
- On March 13, the four schools with the top percentage of participation based on student enrollment were notified of their \$10,000 prize. The winning schools were:
 - **Options Middle School** in Littleton: It achieved a **2182.05%** student participation rate as a percentage of its student population.
 - **Vineland Middle School** in Pueblo: It achieved a **460.06%** student participation rate as a percentage of its student population.
 - **Vikan Middle School** in Brighton: It achieved a **99.83%** student participation rate as a percentage of its student population.
 - **Prairie Heights Middle School** in Evans: It achieved a **181.94%** student participation rate as a percentage of its student population.

- A total of 62 schools participated in the program.
- Students completed and submitted a total of 15,703 challenges.
- As a follow up to the challenge, CDPHE is offering another free resource kit, known as the “Bucket List” kit. This activity kit is designed for counselors, teachers, after-school or extracurricular group leaders, and others who work with young people. Through small group activities, youth are encouraged to talk about the goals that matter to them and how retail marijuana can get in their way. Schools can request the free kit at www.goodtoknowcolorado.com/bucket-list.
- The *Protect What’s Next* Challenge effort was intended to complement, not replace, what schools already were teaching in the classroom, such as Lifeskills Training, Project Alert, or any other evidence-based curricula.

About the *Protect What’s Next* Campaign

- The *Protect What’s Next* Challenge is just one element of the *Protect What’s Next* campaign to encourage youth to think about their goals and not use retail marijuana before age 21.
- *Protect What’s Next* is a comprehensive media campaign showing how using retail marijuana before age 21 has the potential to get in the way of youth achieving their goals.
- The campaign is based on research that shows that the most compelling reason for youth to not to use marijuana is that it could get in the way of achieving their goals.
- Aligned with research that shows that youth often reject standard public health statements, this campaign aims to build a platform that is authentic, relatable and engaging to youth, allowing them to own, shape and share the overall message.
- The *Protect What’s Next* campaign uses a combination of video placements online and in-app, digital advertising, a Buzzfeed partnership, streaming radio advertising, cinema advertising, paid and organic social media, outreach tactics with youth groups, and in-person events, including the *Protect What’s Next* Challenge and the *Protect What’s Next* Adventures - a partnership with TEDxMileHigh.
- Youth are directed to the www.ProtectWhatsNext.com website to engage with the Goal Getter, an interactive tool that helps youth identify their own personal goals and provides motivation on how to complete these goals. The site also educates youth on the health effects and consequences of using retail marijuana before age 21.
- Visit www.ProtectWhatsNext.com or the campaign’s social channels at:
 - Facebook: www.facebook.com/whatsnextCO/
 - Instagram: [@whatsnextCO](https://www.instagram.com/whatsnextCO)

About CDPHE’s Retail Marijuana Education Program

- The Retail Marijuana Education Program is paid for with marijuana tax revenue. Projects include *Good to Know*; the Spanish-language campaign, *Marihuana En Colorado*; and efforts to encourage youth to not use retail marijuana before age 21.
- Launched in August 2015, the state’s youth prevention efforts include two separate but complementary campaigns:
 - *Protect What’s Next*: This youth-focused campaign is built on the understanding that the number one deterrent to underage marijuana use is that marijuana has the potential to get in the way of youth achieving their goals. The campaign appeals to young adults’ emotional decision making and

reminds them that using retail marijuana before age 21 can significantly impact their short- and long-term goals.

- *Good to Know - for parents and other adults:* CDPHE leverages adults that youth trust and respect to deliver factual information about not using retail marijuana before age 21. Our research shows parents, educators, coaches, mentors or anyone who works with youth can have a significant influence on youth choices about marijuana through honest, positive, effective conversations with the youth in their lives.

Retail Marijuana Use by Colorado Youth

- The [2015 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey \(HKCS\)](#) found youth marijuana use has remained unchanged for 10 years, even following the legalization of retail marijuana.
- Colorado remains slightly below the national average for current marijuana youth use (21.2% in Colorado versus 21.7% nationally).
- Four out of five (78%) of Colorado high school students have not used marijuana in the last 30 days.
- According to the Monitoring Health Concerns Related to Marijuana in Colorado: 2016 report, more than 1-in-3 adolescents who use marijuana first use it by age 14, supporting prevention efforts aimed at children before they enter ninth grade.