



**Birdville Independent School District**

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**Haltom High School Teen to Tackle Tobacco Issues with Texas Lawmakers  
Local Teen Chosen as Texas Youth Summit Delegate at State Capitol**

Texas teenagers from across the state will travel to Austin in March to tackle tobacco issues in an interactive way to learn more about tobacco prevention.

Natalie Bodak will represent Senate District 12 (Fort Worth) at the first statewide Texas Youth Summit, at which Bodak will train on the legislative process, educate legislators about tobacco issues and participate in Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day. Potential teen delegates applied for the opportunity and were chosen by the Texas Youth Summit selection committee.

“The reason I decided to apply for this opportunity is to spread tobacco awareness, and I'm excited to meet with my legislators to talk about tobacco-related issues that interest me like teen tobacco use,” said Natalie Bodak.

Sixty youth delegates from around the state will craft recommendations to curb tobacco use among Texas teens. The youth will delve into secondhand smoke, cessation and prevention issues such as youth access and enforcement, and general health implications including smokeless tobacco issues.

Delegates will learn the legislative process, meet with lawmakers and will participate in the third Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day, an annual awareness day in Texas that encourages students of all ages to live tobacco-free lifestyles. Taking place on March 25, Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day is a celebration of youth leadership and activism in tobacco prevention efforts. In addition to the Texas Youth Summit activities at the Capitol, the goal of Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day is to get every school in Texas involved in the effort to help children make healthy choices by not using tobacco.

Bodak will convene with other students from around the state March 22-25 in Austin, and is available now to discuss the issues that will take her to the Texas Youth Summit.

Research has demonstrated that prevention is the key to ending the cycle of tobacco-related health issues. In Texas, people under 18 bought or smoked 67.7 million packs of cigarettes last year, and nine out of ten adult smokers started when they were teens. More than 500,000 Texas kids under 18 who are alive today will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

**About the Center for Safe Communities & Schools (CSCS)**

CSCS is a grant-funded center within the Department of Criminal Justice at Texas State University in San Marcos. The Community & Youth Initiatives division manages state contracts from the Texas Department of State Health Services to help accomplish the goals of the State's tobacco prevention initiative. Through training and technical assistance, CYI strives to increase the capacity of Texas communities and schools to effectively create positive change in reducing the burden of tobacco use and secondhand smoke.

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