Using Social Marketing to Promote Tobacco-Free Schools

We're Watching

Background
- According to the CDC, 95% of smokers initiate tobacco use before the age of 18.
- A key approach to reduce youth smoking in the US is the adoption of Tobacco-Free School policies across school districts.

Strategy
A New York State social marketing campaign targeting school administrators, to promote adoption and enforcement of Tobacco-Free School policies.

Campaign
- Campaign concepts and messages were tested in focus groups of school district superintendents and school board members.
- Featured print ads in EdWeek, School Administrator, Educational Leadership and local New York State educator publications.
- Featured online ads on District Administration Utopia, Edweek and local educator websites.
- Sent direct email communications through the New York State Department of Education.

Evaluation
577 principals and district superintendents completed follow-up surveys.

After viewing the campaign:
- School's Tobacco-free Policy will prevent and reduce tobacco use among students?
- Made me think about doing more to enforce my school's Tobacco-Free Policy?
- Ads grabbed attention?
- Frequently exposed to ads?
- Administrators regularly read one or more of the target print publications?
- Administrators regularly visited target websites?

Conclusion
Social marketing efforts targeted to school administrators can reach and engage the target audience to increase awareness of the importance of tobacco-free school policies.