

# Carteret County partners with schools to provide students drug-free life skills training

by Annette Weston

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***“You will never stop people walking off the end of the cliff if you don’t stop people from getting on the trail.”***

BEAUFORT, Carteret County — [Carteret County Commissioner](#) Robin Comer made that statement in February of 2018 during a county board meeting while discussing the opioid and substance abuse issue. His point was that conversations about the effects of substance abuse needed to be started early, before use becomes an addiction.

Now the county is partnering with [Carteret Public School System](#) to begin offering classes through the [Botvin LifeSkills Training for Drug-Free Youth](#) during the coming school year. They say it’s an evidence-based program designed to address key risk factors that may lead young people to start smoking, drinking and taking drugs.

Sue Kreuser, the school system’s Director of Healthful Living, says teachers and counselors have completed the required training and plan to start classes in October. The program will focus on personal self-management, general social skills and drug-resistant skills and Kreuser says she and Superintendent Mat Bottoms will observe and monitor the classes.

***“For years, students in the county have completed a confidential survey which specifically asks questions about their use of alcohol or drugs, and the numbers are alarming,” Kreuser said. “We are hopeful that we will see a decrease in these numbers as a result of the program.”***

Commissioner Chairman Mark Mansfield said the program has shown tremendous success rates in other locations and they hope to see a difference among the district’s students.

***“Every day we hear about the effects of opioids and substance abuse on the person abusing drugs or alcohol. Unfortunately, it does not stop there. Substance abuse affects family members, friends and acquaintances. It affects the welfare of the individual, but it also strongly impacts the welfare of our County. It alters lives. It destroys dreams and aspirations. It alters futures. It kills. If this program saves one youth within our County, then our investment is well worth the investment.”***