

# CPM Helps San Mateo School Districts File Lawsuit Against Juul

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Redwood City-Multiple County of San Mateo school districts (including **Cabrillo Unified School District**, **Jefferson Union High School District**, and **San Mateo-Foster City School District**) and the **San Mateo County Board of Education** and the **San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools** have filed suit against **Juul Labs, Inc.** over Juul's marketing strategy, advertising, and product design, which have targeted minors, especially preteens and teenagers, resulting in increased use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) by youth in San Mateo County.

A shocking **20.8 percent of teens in San Mateo County used e-cigarettes in 2018**, up from 11.8 percent in 2017, and much higher than the state average of 10.9 percent, according to the California Student Tobacco Survey. Even use by middle school students is sharply rising.

The physiologic effects of nicotine exposure in adolescence is well understood and impacts learning, memory, and attention. San Mateo schools, like schools around the country, are struggling to ban use on campus and keep students focused on learning. Complicating the situation is the Juul packaging, which is designed to conceal the fact that it is an e-cigarette and instead to look like a USB drive, a common device used by students.

**Joe Cotchett**, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, the outside firm representing the school districts, said "the vaping epidemic is a monumental crisis in our schools – Juul has addicted a generation of kids in a couple short years. Our local school districts are among the first in the Country to stand up to Juul and its big tobacco backers."

**Anne Marie Murphy**, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, added that "with one in five San Mateo high schoolers vaping, schools are facing a health crisis—they are having to re-tool overnight. It is not just the 20% use rate that is alarming, it is also the steep year-over-year increase in use and addiction."

## Attorneys

Anne Marie Murphy

## Practice Areas

Municipal & Public Entity  
Litigation

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The lawsuits have been filed by **Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, LLP**, based in Burlingame, and co-counsel at the **Renne Public Law Group, Migliaccio & Rathod, LLP**; **Wagstaff & Cartmell, LLP**; and the **San Mateo County Counsel's Office** to challenge Juul and big tobacco.