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**Course can help students kick habit**

*East Jeff High takes new tack in old fight*

**Source:** New Orleans (LA) Times Picayune, 2004-02-29

**Author:** Mark Waller / East Jefferson bureau

**Intro:**

But one day after class let out at East Jefferson High in Metairie, he was in the schoolyard waiting for a ride and Principal James Kytile caught him smoking. Now, along with studying English, mathematics and science, Baehr is taking a class unique among New Orleans area schools, one that teaches the dangers of smoking and how to quit.

Tired of repeatedly suspending the same students for smoking, Kytile joined with the Jefferson Parish public school system's drug-free schools program and the Greater New Orleans Cancer Association to create the 10-session course. First-offenders are now referred to the class instead of being suspended.

"They were getting caught over and over again, and the punishment didn't seem to faze them," Kytile said. . . .

Led by Tammy Louk of the cancer association, the students talk about how much money the habit costs, the diseases it causes and marketing tactics of tobacco companies. They blow through straws to test the

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strength of their lungs, blow into a carbon monoxide monitor to measure the poisonous gas in their blood and examine a model of a diseased mouth. They also get tips on quitting.

Louk said it's the only class of its type in local schools, but she's trying to train teachers elsewhere in hopes the idea will spread.

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