



Belmont Middle and High School 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data Highlights



ABOUT THE YRBS

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)¹ monitors the prevalence of health risk behaviors that are often established during adolescence and contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults. In Belmont, the YRBS reports on:

- **Student demographics:** Gender, sexual identity, race, ethnicity, grade
- **Substance use:** Alcohol, marijuana, vaping, and perception of substance use
- **Mental health and wellness:** Stress, depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide, coping strategies
- **Personal safety:** Bullying, sexual and dating violence

The YRBS is conducted every two years nationally by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state-wide in Massachusetts by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Department of Public Health (DPH).

YRBS IN BELMONT

The Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC) is a program of Wayside Youth and Family Support Network. BWC uses education and empowerment to prevent and reduce substance misuse, and to promote healthy choices and positive decision-making, in Belmont youth.

In Belmont, the YRBS is administered every two years to all middle and high school students. BWC works with John Snow, Inc. (JSI) to support survey administration, produces this report in partnership with Data+Soul Research, and disseminates findings in collaboration with school and community partners. Lisa Gibalerio, MPH (BWC Director) and Molly Pistrang-Gomes, M.Ed. (BWC's Evaluator) authored the report with contributions from Wendy Conroy, MPH (BWC Chair) and Becky Furth (BWC member). See more information on survey administration in [Appendix A. Methodology](#).

JSI supports YRBS administration among other Middlesex County communities ("Middlesex League") to monitor and compare trends in health and wellness. Participating communities include Arlington, **Belmont**, Burlington, Melrose, Reading (high school only), Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Throughout the report, key findings are featured in both text and chart form presented on the left and across the bottom. Related findings are presented on the right.

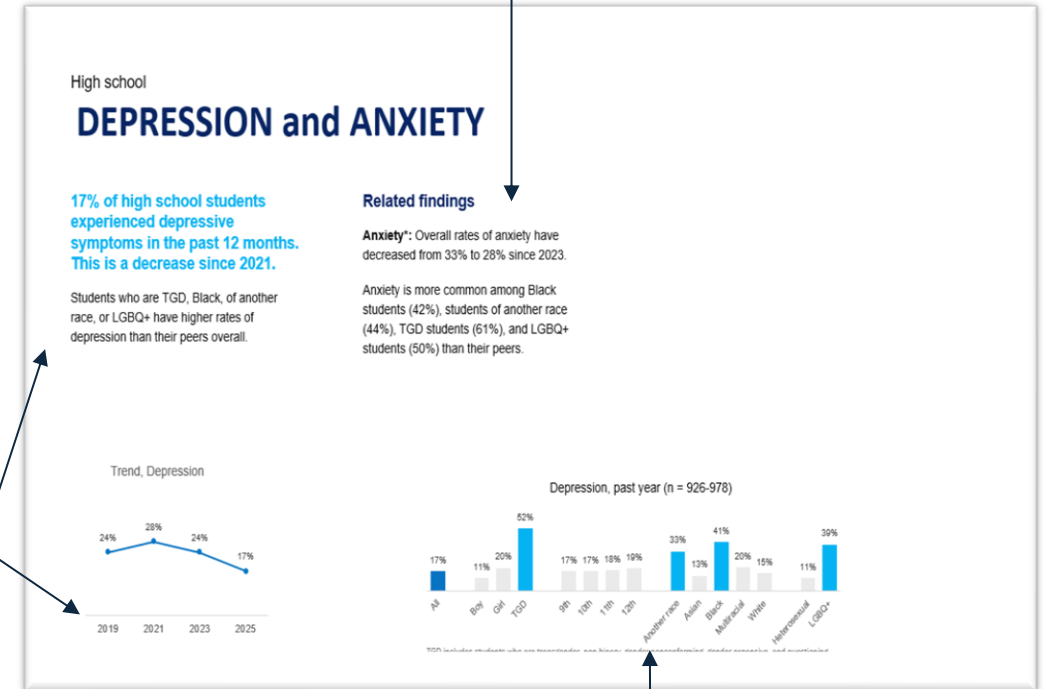
All findings are calculated as percentages. Patterns are reported with 5% used as a general benchmark for noting differences between groups or over time.

When relevant, the number of respondents (n) for a given question or response option is reported.

Full text of survey questions are included in [Appendix A. Methodology.](#)

Key findings, also illustrated in charts across the bottom

Related findings



All key findings are broken down by gender identity, grade, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation

COUNT OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Middle School

Grade	Responses	Percentage of grade
7 th	338	90%
8 th	321	87%
Total	659	89%

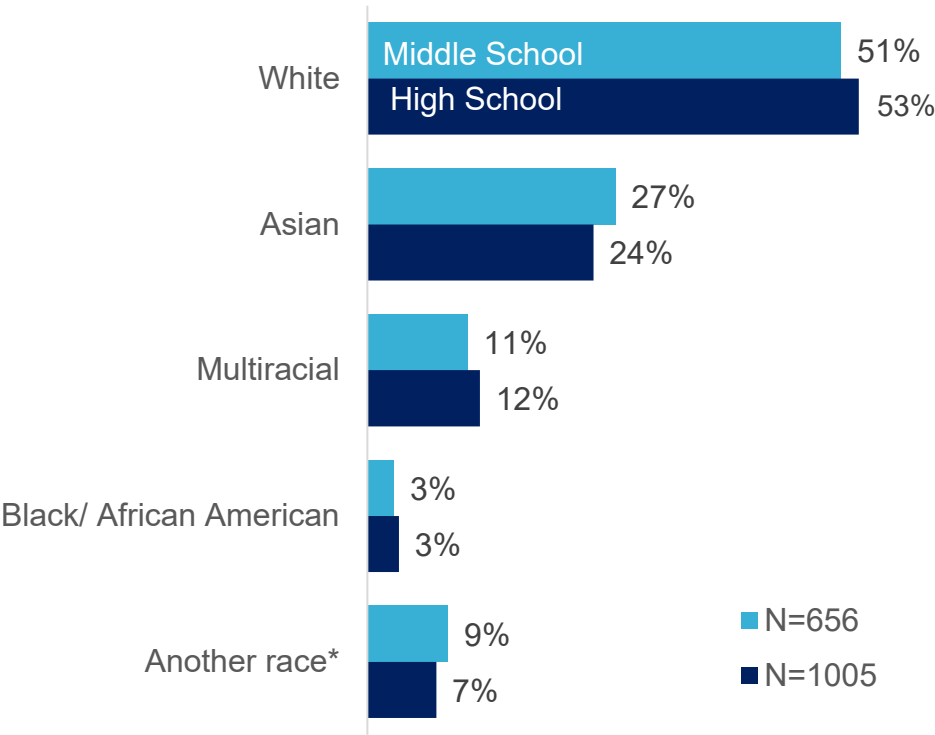
High School

Grade	Responses	Percentage of grade
9 th	256	78%
10 th	292	72%
11 th	257	69%
12 th	199	57%
Total	1004	69%

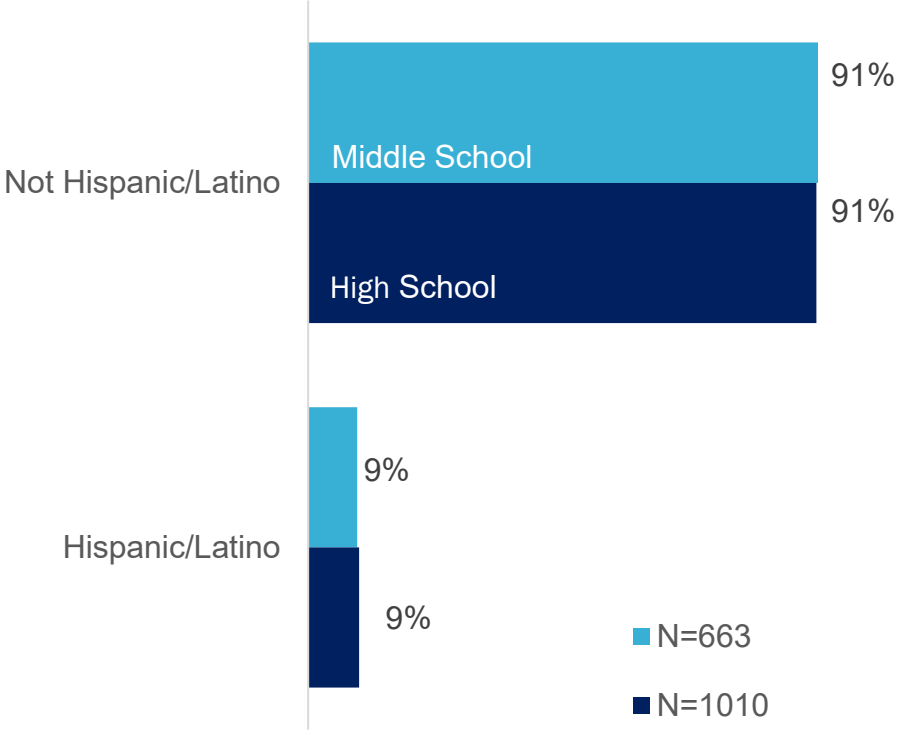
Note: The percentage of students who took the YRBS was calculated using DESE enrollment numbers from 2024-2025, which may not be the exact enrollment numbers on the survey dates.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Race



Ethnicity

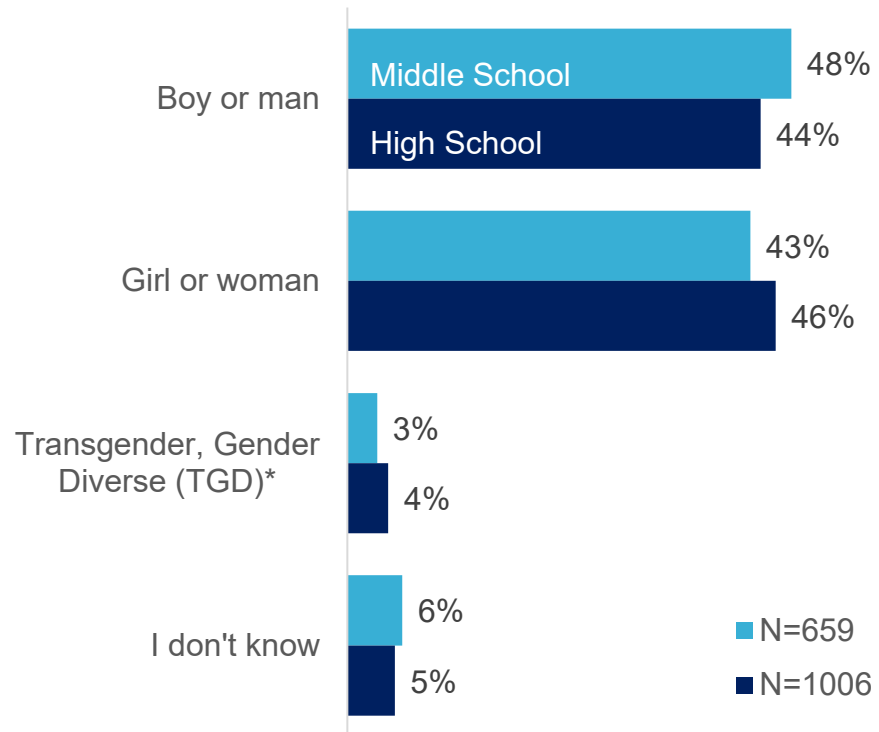


*Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race. Hispanic/Latino are included in race to be consistent with new census categories for race.

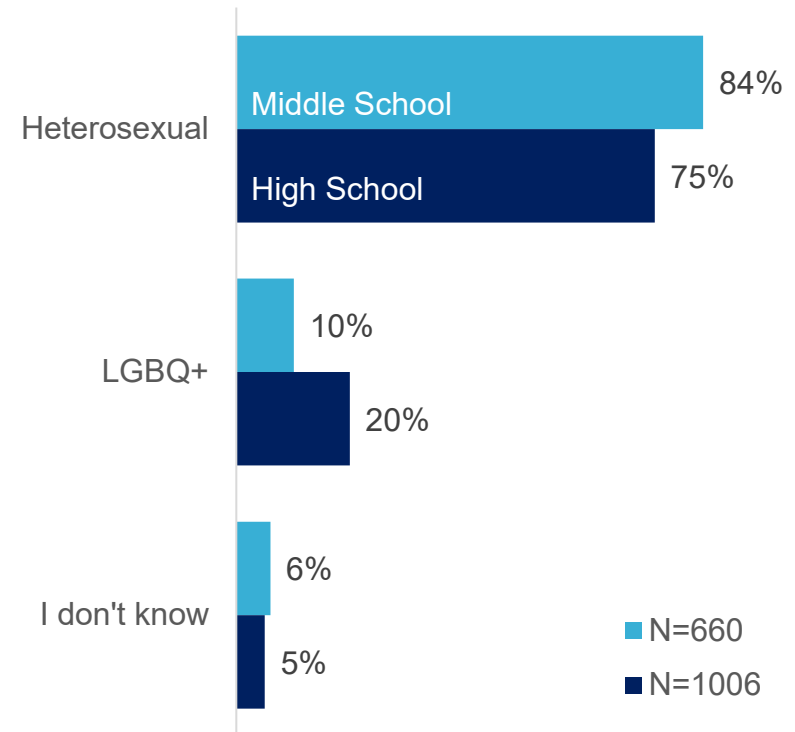
Note: N counts are determined by number of valid responses for each question, which means n may vary.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



*TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning

Note: N counts are determined by number of valid responses for each question, which means n may vary.

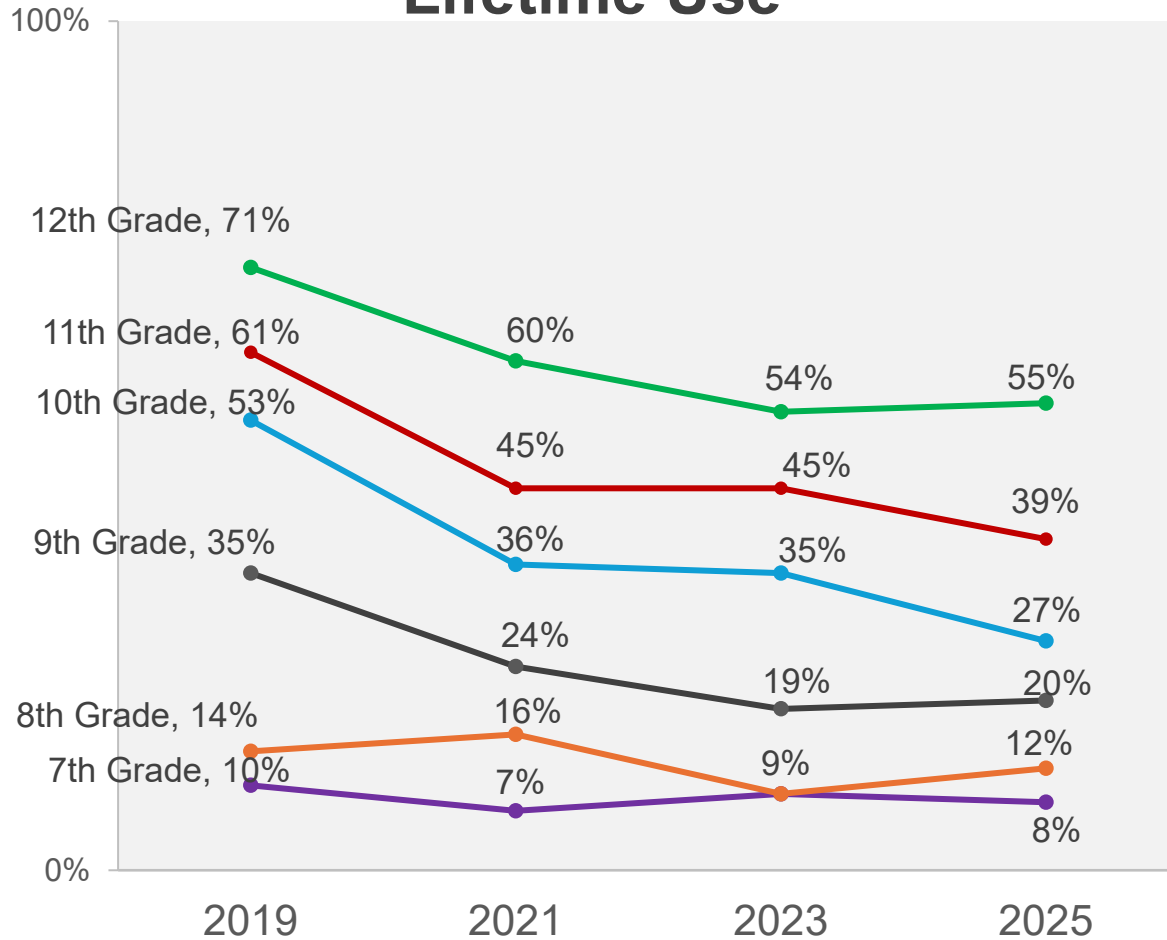
SUBSTANCE USE

ALCOHOL
MARIJUANA
VAPING

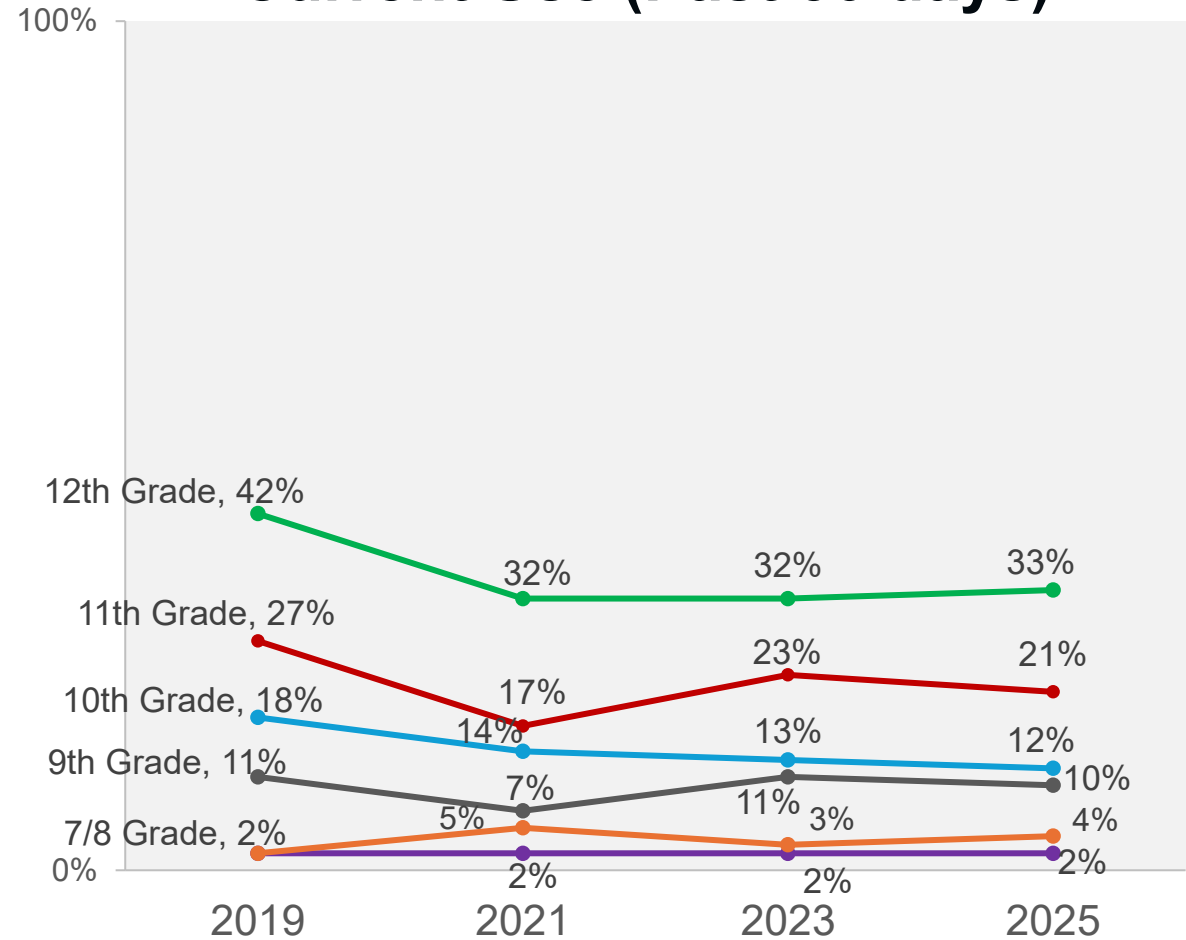
Middle and High School

ALCOHOL USE, by grade

Lifetime Use



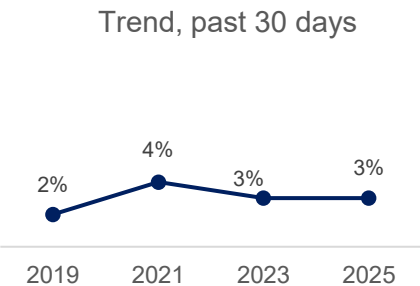
Current Use (Past 30 days)



ALCOHOL USE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Since 2019, current alcohol use has remained level among middle school students.

Drinking is more common among Black students and students of another race compared to their peers. (Another race includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, another race.)

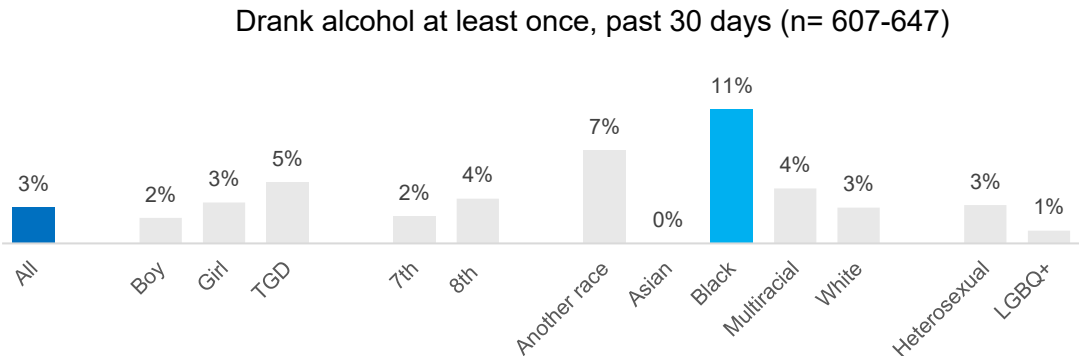


Related Findings

Ease of Access: Alcohol becomes less difficult to access as student grade increases. 63% of 7th graders and only 48% of 8th graders say it is hard to access alcohol.

Means of Access: Of students who have consumed alcohol in their lifetime, 65% got it at home, 27% got it through a friend, and 21% got it at parties.

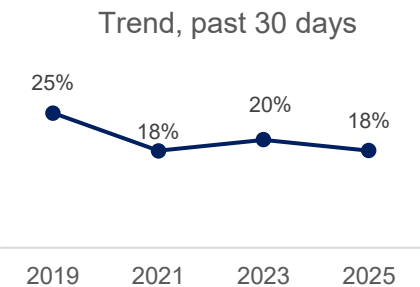
Student Perception of Risk: Across both grades, student perception of the risk of regularly consuming alcohol has decreased over time.



ALCOHOL USE: HIGH SCHOOL

Current alcohol use has remained level among high school students since 2021, with 18% reporting alcohol use in the past 30 days.

Drinking is more common among TGD and girl students compared to boy students. Students in 11th and 12th grades drink more than students in 9th and 10th grades. Multiracial students report drinking more than their peers.

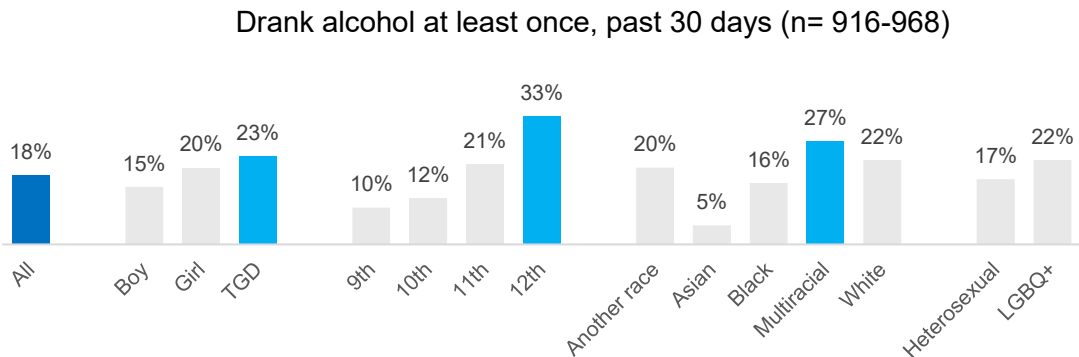


Related Findings

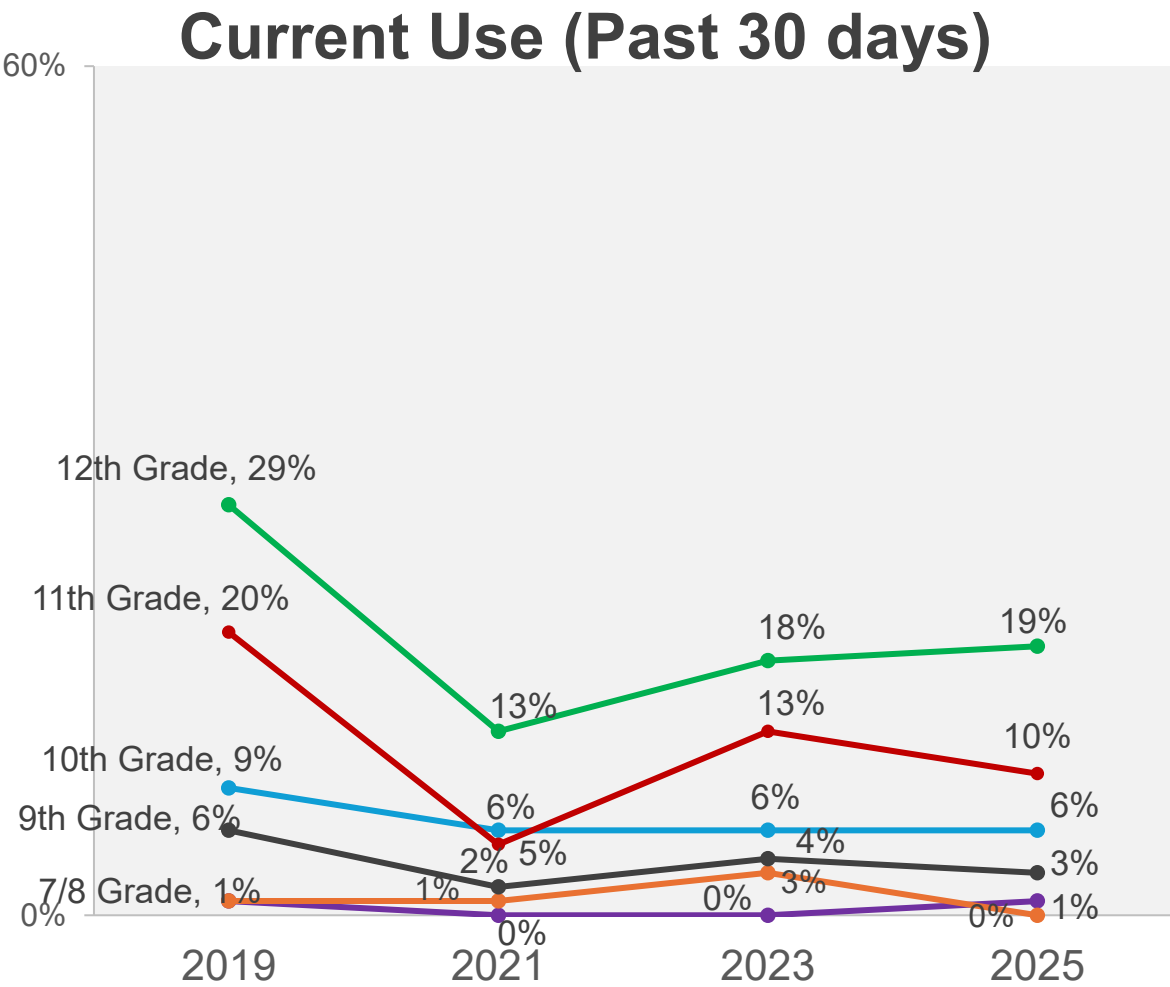
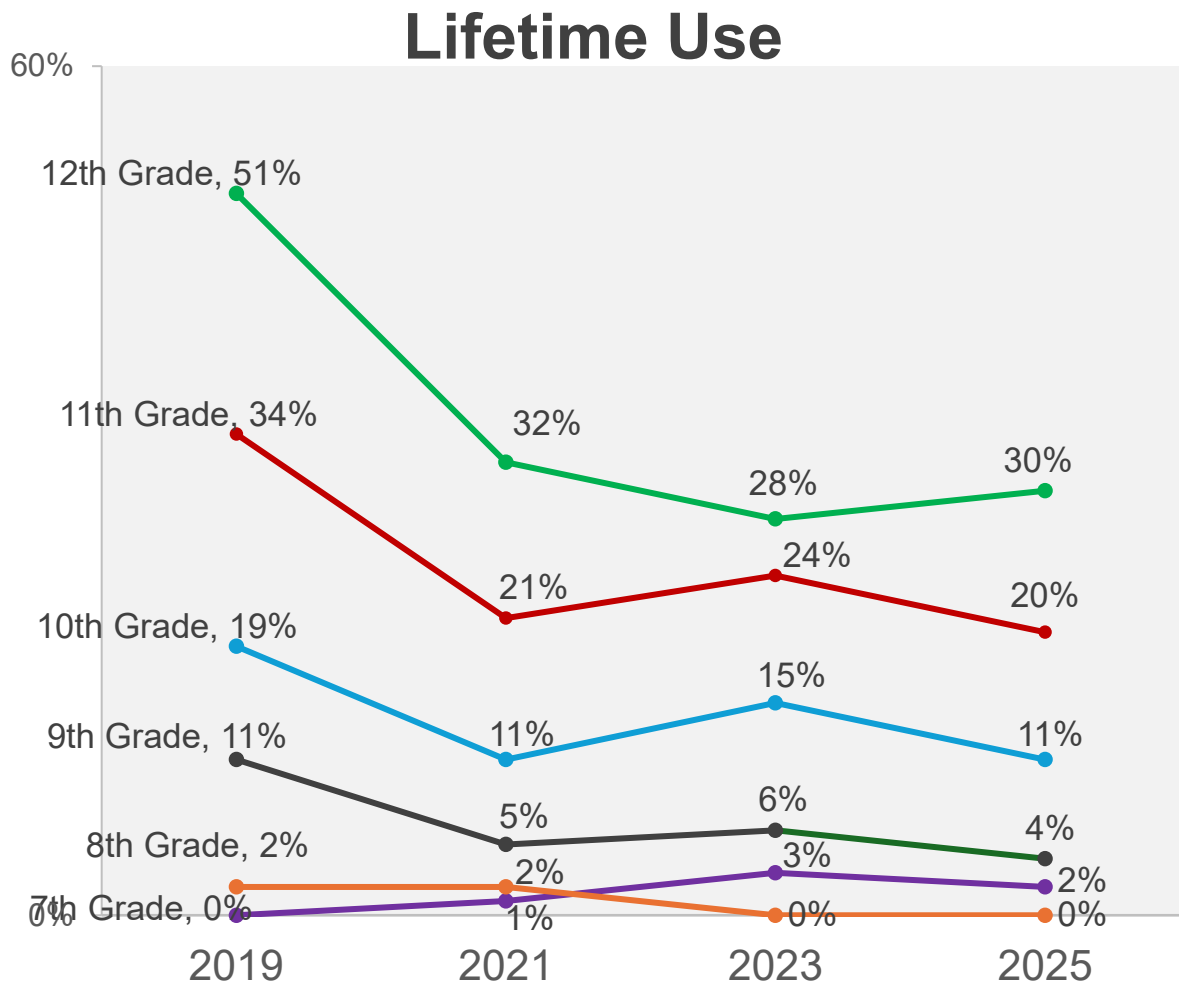
Ease of Access: Alcohol becomes less difficult to access as student grade increases. 44% of 9th and 10th grade students, 37% of 11th grade students, and 30% of 12th grade students say it is hard to access alcohol.

Means of Access: Of students who have consumed alcohol, 46% got it at parties, 45% got it from friends, and 35% got it at home.

Student Perception of Risk: Across all grades, student perception of the risk of regularly consuming alcohol has decreased over time.



MARIJUANA USE, by grade



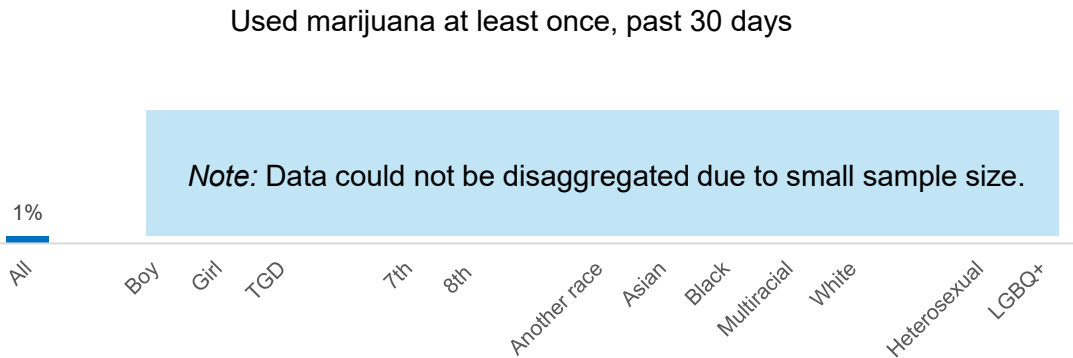
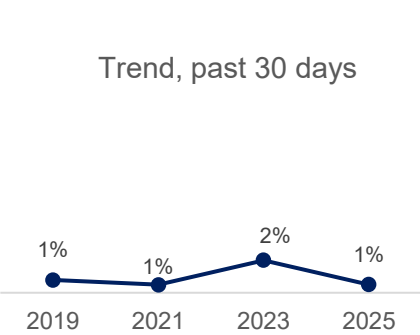
MARIJUANA USE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Among middle school students, marijuana use has remained consistent since 2019, fluctuating between 1% and 2%.

Related Findings

Ease of Access: 94% of 7th and 8th graders say it is hard to access marijuana.

Student Perception of Risk: The perception of risk of marijuana use has stayed consistent among 8th graders but has decreased among 7th graders.

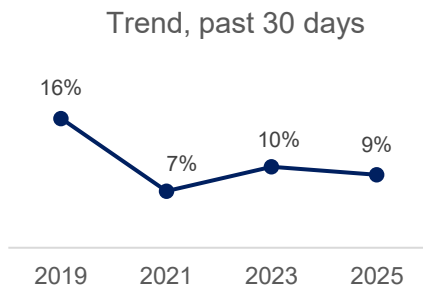


TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race.

MARIJUANA USE: HIGH SCHOOL

Current marijuana use among high school students has decreased by 44% since 2019, with 9% reporting marijuana use in 2025.

TGD, Black, multiracial, and LGBTQ+ students report using marijuana more than their peers. Marijuana use increases with grade.

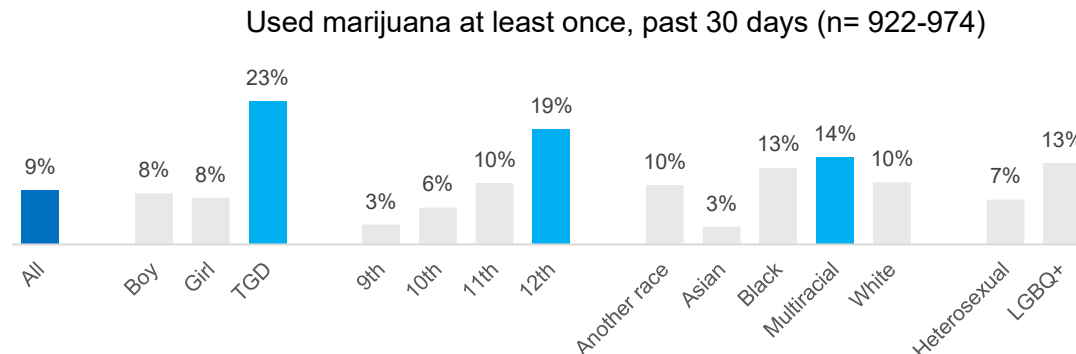


Related Findings

Ease of Access: It becomes less difficult to access marijuana as student grade increases. 83% of 9th graders say it is hard to access marijuana, while 51% of 12th graders say it is hard.

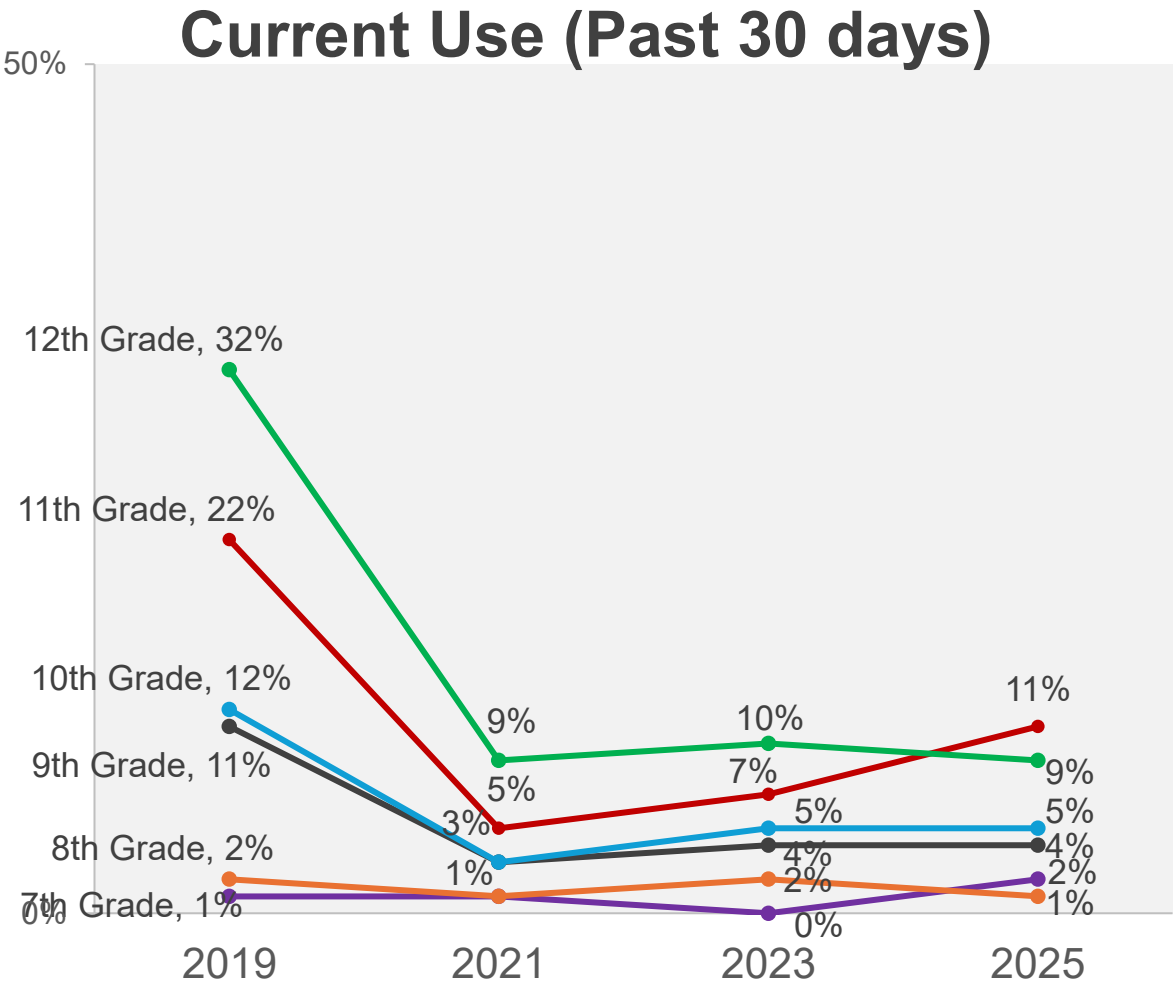
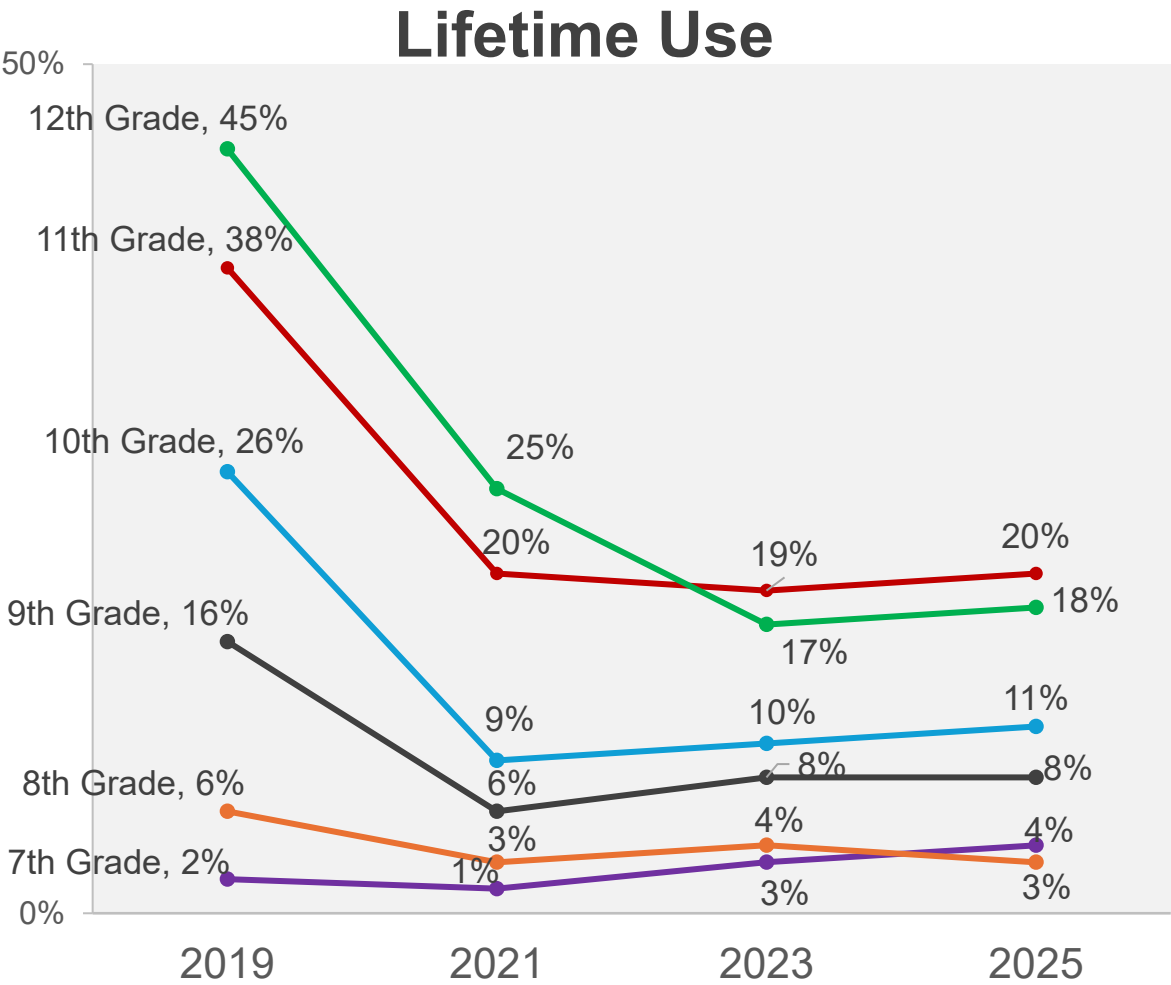
Means of Access: Of students who currently use marijuana, 59% got it from friends, 30% bought it from someone else, 26% got it some other way, 25% got it at parties, and 24% got it at home with permission from a parent or family member over the age of 21.

Student Perception of Risk: Since 2021, the perception of risk of marijuana use has fluctuated among 9th graders, stayed consistent among 10th and 12th graders, and increased among 11th graders.



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
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ELECTRONIC VAPOR USE, by grade



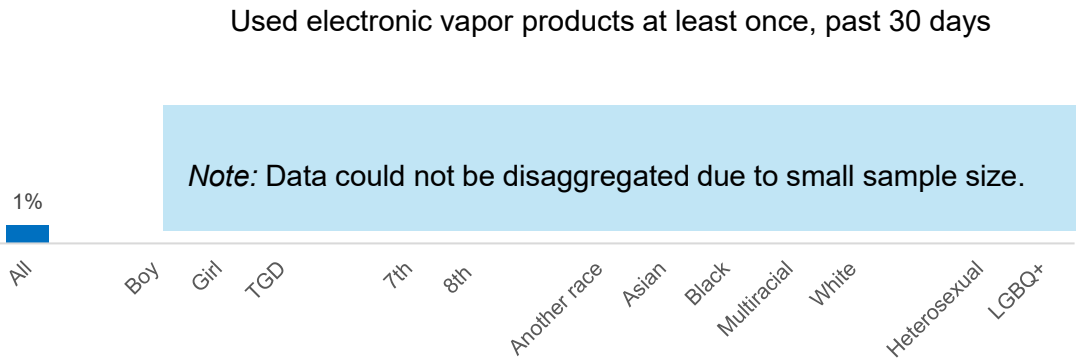
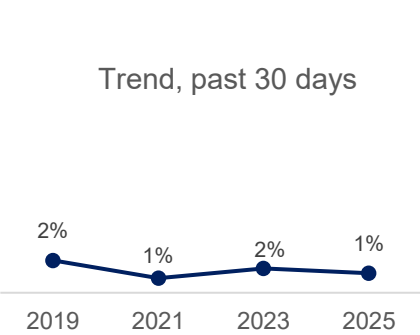
ELECTRONIC VAPOR USE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Since 2019, current electronic vapor use has stayed consistent among middle school students, fluctuating between 1% and 2%.

Related Findings

Ease of Access: Middle school students report that it is difficult to access electronic vapor products (82% of 7th graders and 82% of 8th graders).

Student Perception of Risk: Since 2021, the perception of risk of electronic vapor use has decreased among 7th graders and stayed consistent among 8th graders.

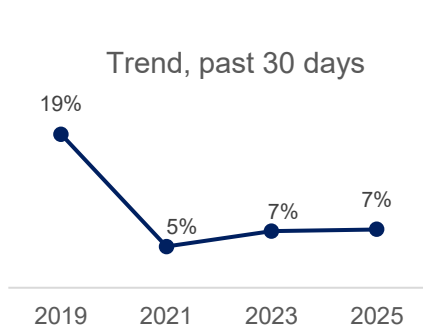


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ELECTRONIC VAPOR USE: HIGH SCHOOL

Since 2019, current electronic vapor use among high school students has decreased by 63% since 2019. 7% of high school students report current use.

Electronic vapor use is more common among TGD, Black, and multiracial students. Students in 11th and 12th grades use electronic vapor products more than students in 9th and 10th grades.



Related Findings

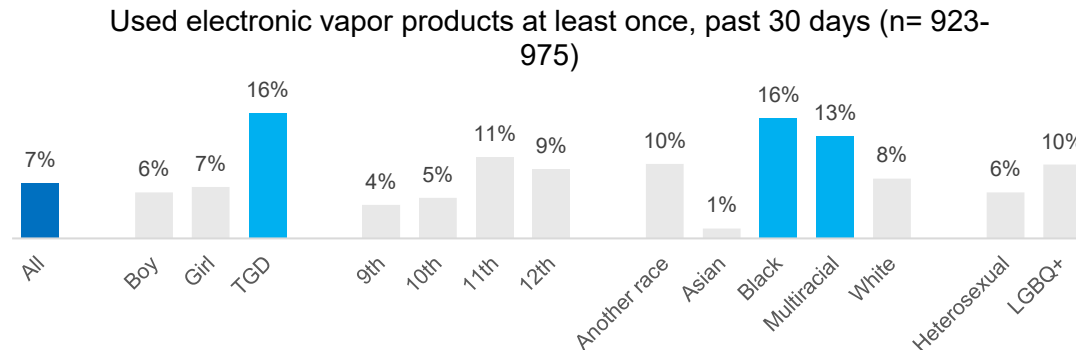
Ease of Access: It becomes less difficult to access electronic vapor products as student grade increases. 67% of 9th, 64% of 10th, 57% of 11th, and only 50% of 12th graders say it is difficult to access electronic vapor products.

Means of Access: Of students who currently vape, 59% got it from a friend, family member, or someone else, 34% bought it from a friend, family member, or someone else, and 33% got it some other way.

Student Perception of Risk:

Student perception of risk of electronic vapor use has stayed consistent among 10th graders but decreased among 9th, 11th, and 12th graders.

Substances Vaped: Of high school students who currently vape, 85% vape nicotine, 64% vape marijuana products, and 22% vape CBD.



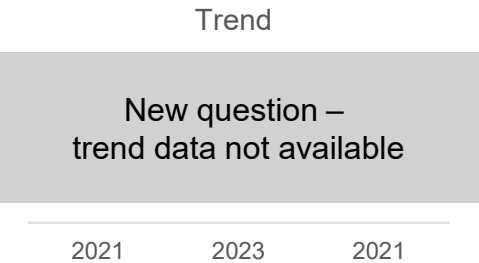
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PERCEPTION OF LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school students believe that their peers have used substances at higher rates than they actually report using, other than alcohol.

Alcohol Use:

The actual reported rate of middle school students that have used alcohol in their lifetime is 10%. 30% of MS students believed the rate was around 10% and 47% thought the rate was lower than that.



Related Findings

Marijuana Use:

64% of middle school students believe that 10% or more of their peers used marijuana products in their lifetime. In reality, only 1% of middle school students reported ever using marijuana products.

Electronic Vapor Product Use:

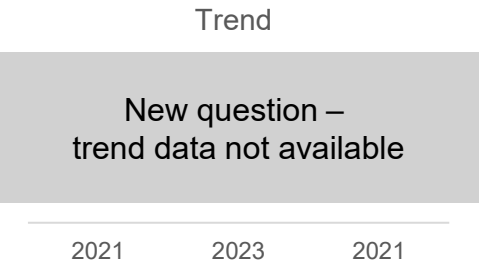
Four out of five of middle school students believe that 10% or more of their peers used electronic vapor products in their lifetime. However, only 3% of middle school students reported using marijuana products in their lifetime.

Substance	% students who reported using substance in their lifetimes (ACTUAL)	% students who perceived use to be		
		LOWER than actual use	SIMILAR to actual use	HIGHER than actual use
Alcohol	10%	47%	30%	23%
Marijuana	1%	0%	46%	64%
Vape products	3%	0%	18%	82%

PERCEPTION OF CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE: HIGH SCHOOL

High school students believe that their peers are using substances at higher rates than they actually report using.

Alcohol Use:
Over two-thirds of high school students believe that 20% or more of their peers drank alcohol in the past 30 days. In reality, 18% of high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.



Related Findings

Marijuana Use:
83% of high school students believe that 10% or more of their peers used marijuana products in the past 30 days. In reality, only 9% of high school students reported using marijuana products in the past 30 days.

Electronic Vapor Product Use:
92% of high school students believe that 10% or more of their peers used electronic vapor products in the past 30 days. However, only 7% of high school students reported using marijuana products in the past 30 days.

Substance	% students who reported using substance in the past 30 days (ACTUAL)	% students who perceived use to be		
		LOWER than actual use	SIMILAR to actual use	HIGHER than actual use
Alcohol	18%	11%	16%	73%
Marijuana	9%	0%	17%	83%
Vape products	7%	0%	8%	92%

MENTAL HEALTH and WELLNESS

STRESS,
DEPRESSION and
ANXIETY
SELF-HARM and SUICIDE
COPING STRATEGIES

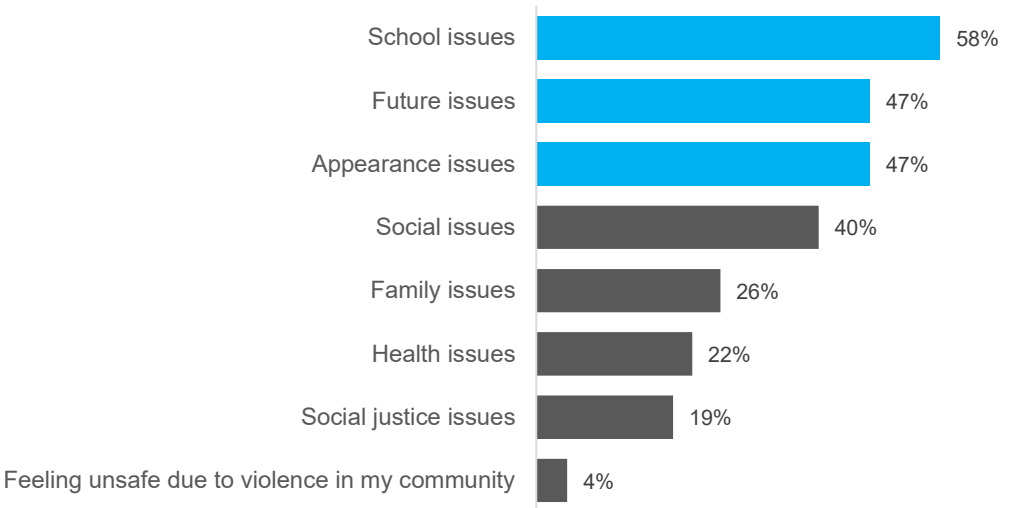
STRESS: MIDDLE SCHOOL

16% of middle school students experienced frequent overwhelming stress this past year.

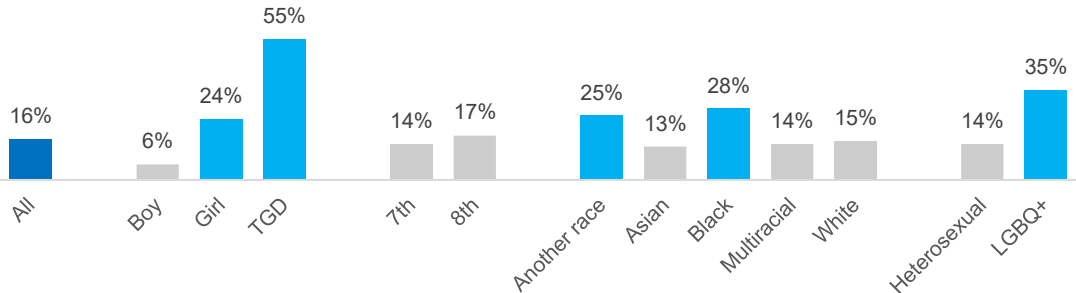
TGD (55%), girl (24%), Black (28%), LGBTQ+ (35%) and students of another race (25%) experience higher rates of stress than their peers overall.



Causes of Stress (n=657)



Overwhelming stress, past year (n= 614-655)



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
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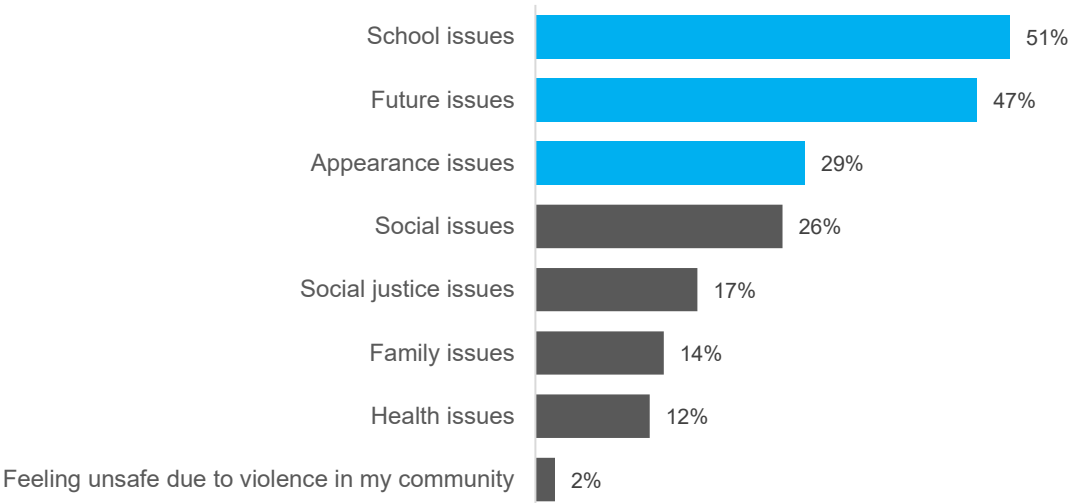
STRESS: HIGH SCHOOL

24% of high school students have experienced overwhelming stress in the past year.

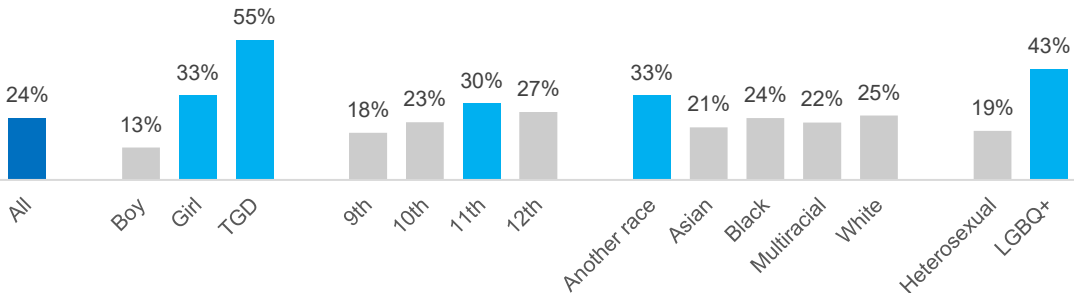
Students who are TGD (55%), girl (33%), 11th grade (30%), LGBTQ+ students (43%), and of another race (33%) report experiencing overwhelming stress at higher rates than their peers.



Causes of Stress (n=986)



Overwhelming stress, past year (n= 933-984)



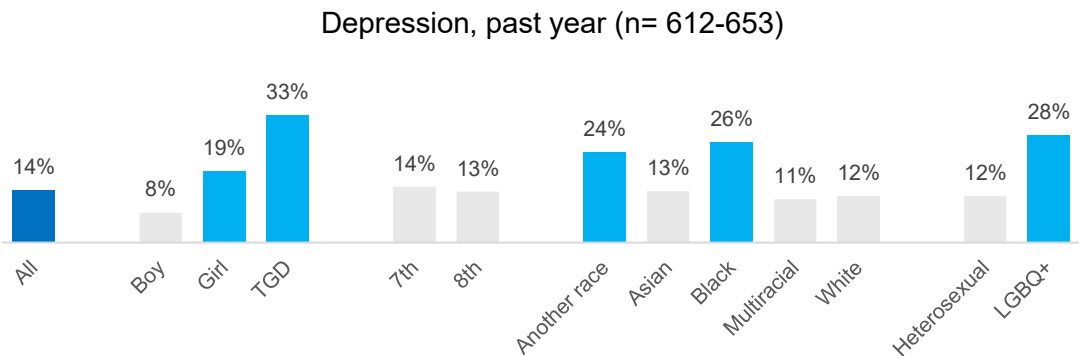
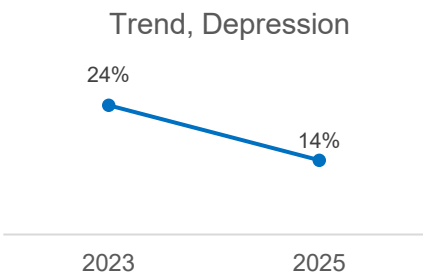
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DEPRESSION: MIDDLE SCHOOL

14% of middle school students experienced depression* in the past year. This is a decrease since 2023.

Groups who report higher rates of depression than their peers overall include students who are: TGD (33%), girl (19%), Black (26%), LGBTQ+ (28%), and of another race (24%).

**Note:*
Depression is defined as a yes response to the question: “During the past year, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”



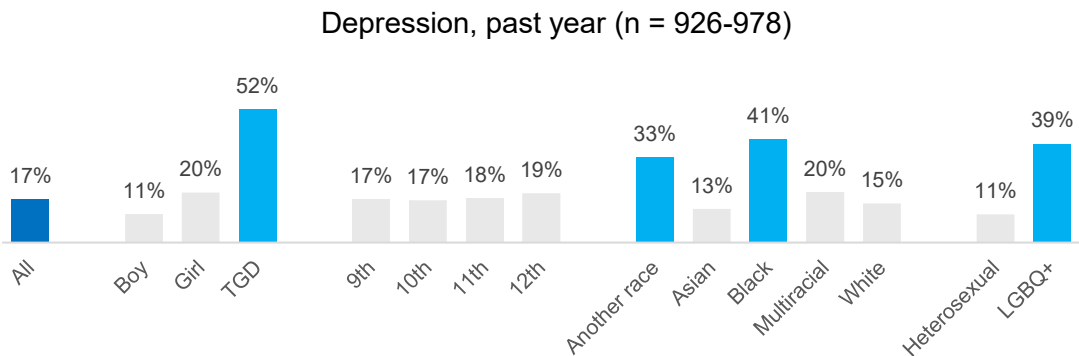
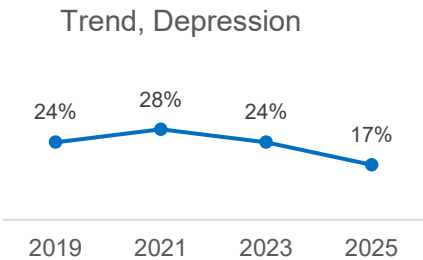
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DEPRESSION: HIGH SCHOOL

17% of high school students experienced depressive symptoms in the past 12 months. This is a decrease since 2021.

Students who are TGD (52%), Black (41%), LGBTQ+ (39%), and of another race (33%) have higher rates of depression* than their peers overall.

**Note:*
Depression is defined as a yes response to the question: “During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”



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ANXIETY: MIDDLE SCHOOL

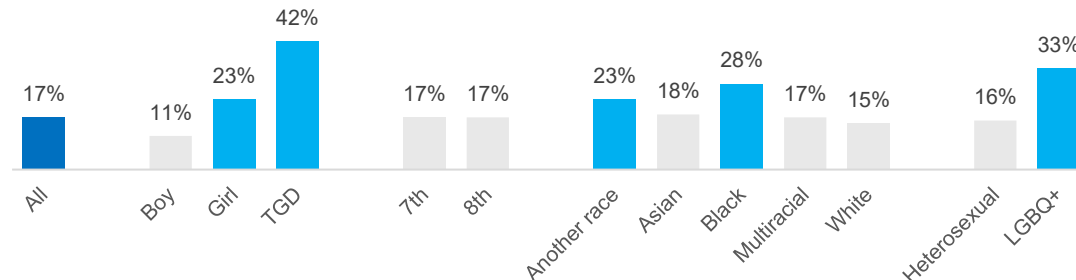
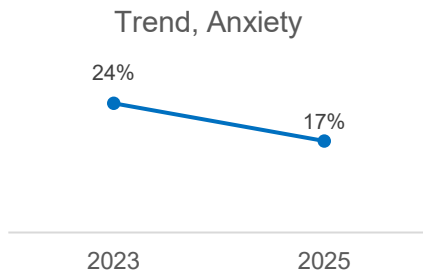
Among middle school students, overall rates of anxiety* have decreased from 24% to 17% since 2023.

In middle school, anxiety is more common among TGD students (42%), girl students (23%), Black students (28%), students of another race (23%), and LGBTQ+ students (33%) than their peers.

Note:

*Anxiety is defined by a yes response to the question: “During the past month, did you ever feel tense, nervous, or worried every day for two or more weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”

Anxiety, past year (n= 606-647)



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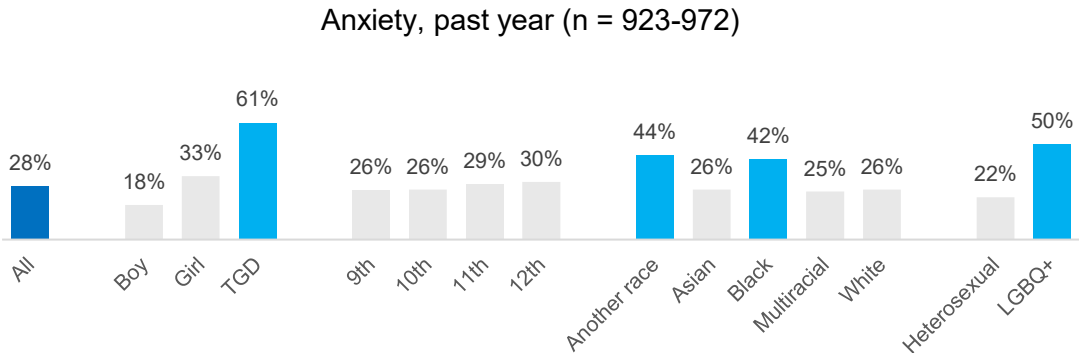
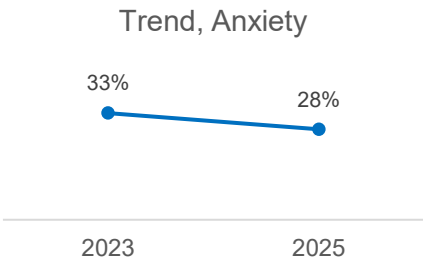
ANXIETY: HIGH SCHOOL

Overall rates of anxiety* have decreased from 33% to 28% since 2023.

Anxiety is more common among Black students (42%), students of another race (44%), TGD students (61%), and LGBTQ+ students (50%) than among their peers.

**Note:*

Anxiety is defined by a yes response to the question: “During the past 30 days, did you ever feel tense, nervous, or worried every day for two or more weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”



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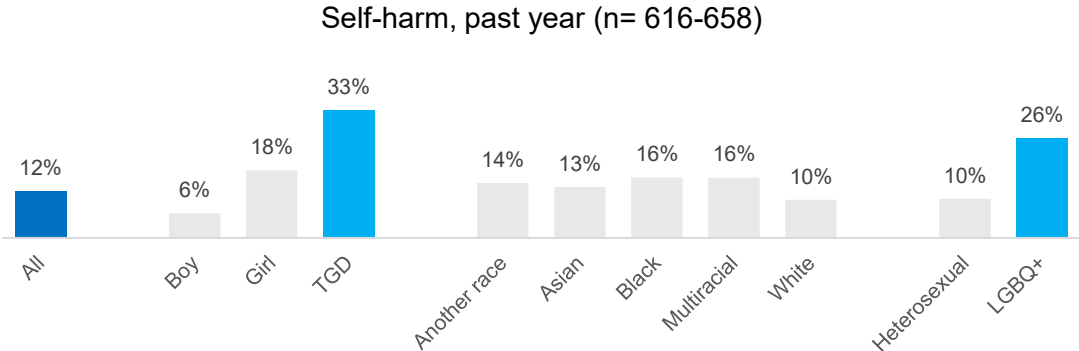
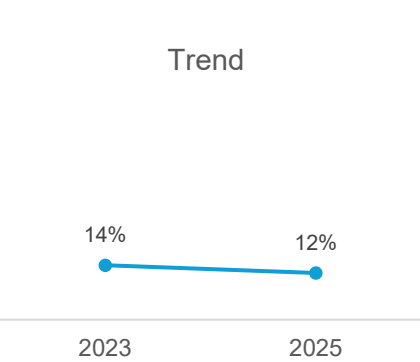
SELF-HARM: MIDDLE SCHOOL

12% of middle school students (80 students) hurt or injured themselves on purpose without wanting to die in the past year.

Overall rates of self-harm among middle school students have remained consistent since 2023, although rates vary among groups.

Related Findings

33% of TDG students and 26% of LGBTQ+ students have self-harmed in the past year.



TDG includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
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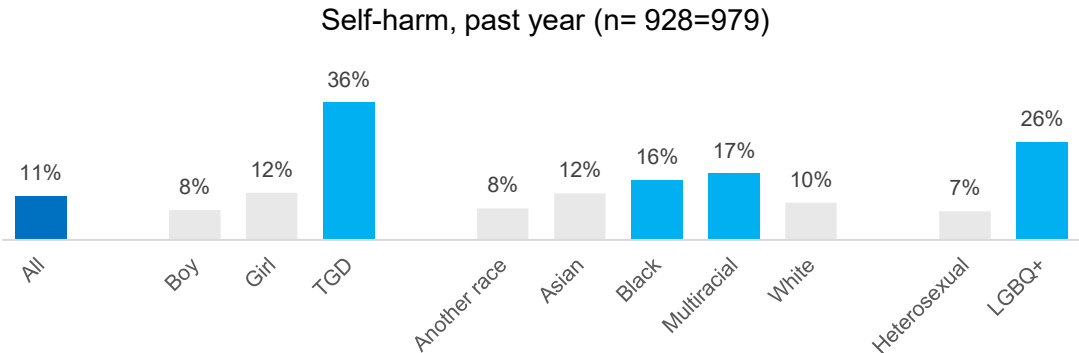
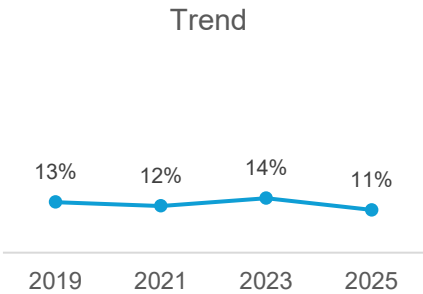
SELF-HARM: HIGH SCHOOL

In the past year, 11% of high school students (111 students) hurt or injured themselves on purpose without wanting to die.

Overall rates of self-harm among high school students have remained consistent since 2019, although there is variation among groups.

Related Findings

36% of TDG students, 26% of LGBTQ+ students, 16% of Black students, and 17% of multiracial students self-harmed in the past year.



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
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SUICIDE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Suicide ideation among TGD and LGBTQ+ middle school students is high compared to students overall.

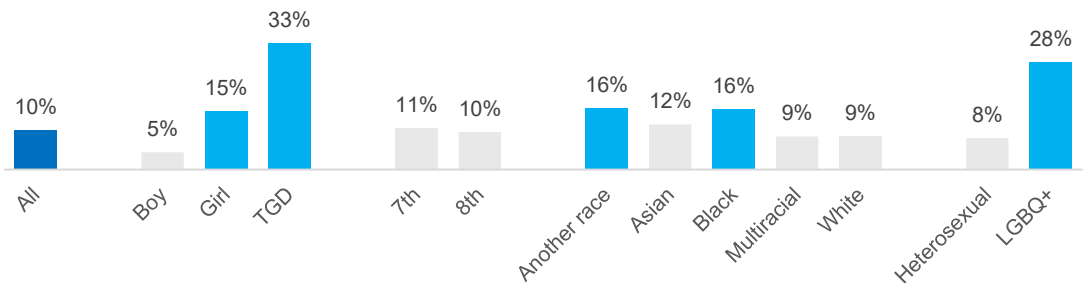
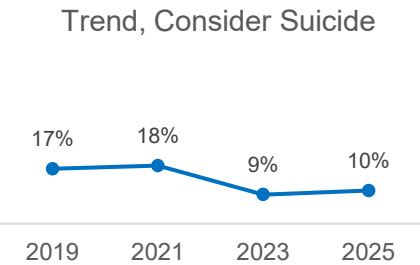
Overall, 10% of middle school students (67 students) have seriously considered attempting suicide and 5% (32 students) have made a suicide plan, both decreases since 2021.

Related Findings

33% of TGD students and 28% of LGBTQ+ students have considered attempting suicide and 24% of TGD students and 16% of LGBTQ+ students have made a suicide plan.

Black students and students of another race consider attempting suicide and Black students made a suicide plan at higher rates compared to students of other races.

Consider suicide, past year (n= 613-653)



SUICIDE: HIGH SCHOOL

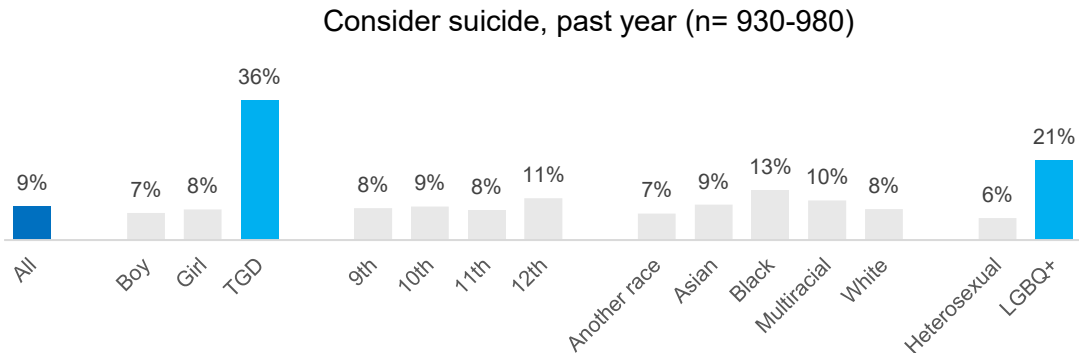
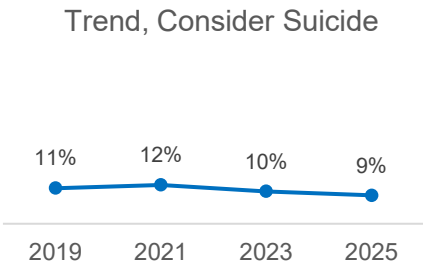
Suicide ideation among TGD and LGBTQ+ high school students is high compared to students overall.

Overall, 9% of high school students (86 students) have seriously considered attempting suicide and 4% (40 students) have made a suicide plan, both slight decreases since 2021.

Related Findings

Of TGD students, 36% have considered attempting suicide and 20% have made a suicide plan. Of LGBTQ+ students, 21% have considered attempting suicide and 11% have made a suicide plan.

Black students consider attempting suicide and made a suicide plan at higher rates compared to students of other races.



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race.

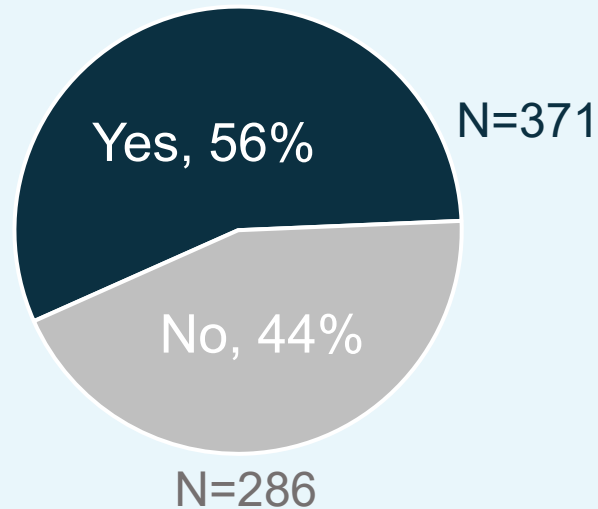
COPING STRATEGIES: MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL

56% of all middle school students and 66% of high school students report having a healthy activity/behavior to help them relieve stress.

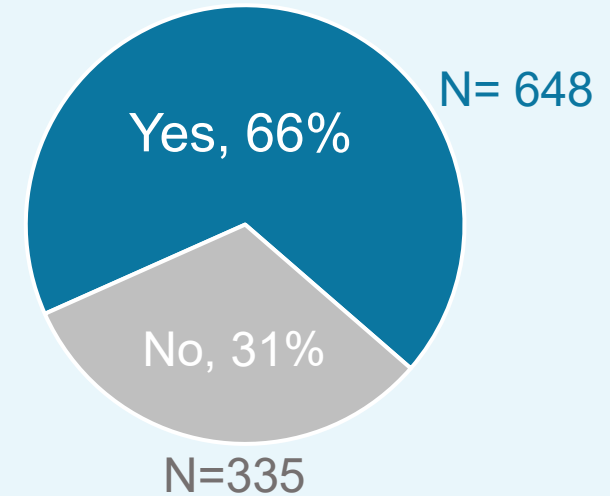
Note:

*Having a coping strategy is defined as a yes response to the question: "Do you have a healthy activity or behavior (coping strategy) that helps you relieve stress?" No includes "no" and "I don't know" responses.

Middle School



High School



PERSONAL SAFETY

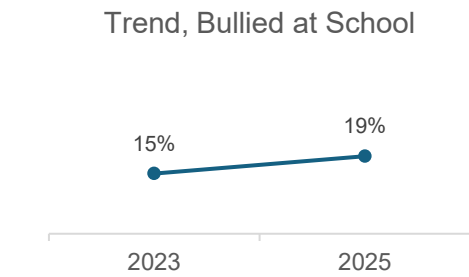
BULLYING
SEXUAL and DATING
VIOLENCE

BULLYING: MIDDLE SCHOOL

19% of all middle school students were bullied on school property in 2025.

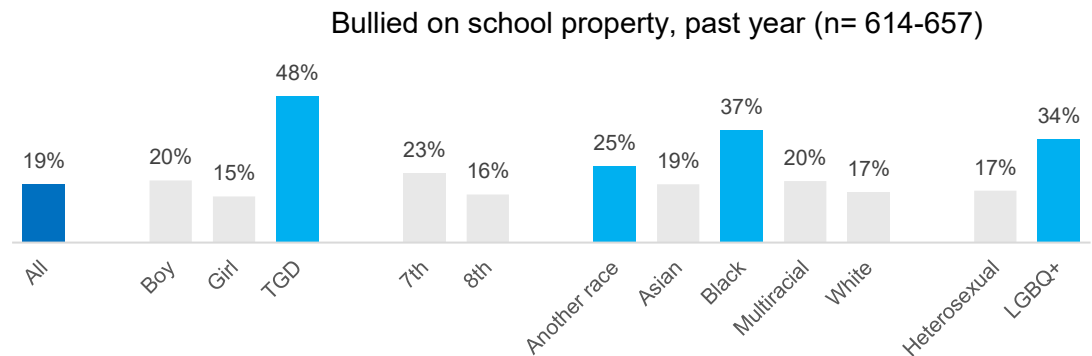
TGD (48%), Black (37%), LGBTQ+ (34%) students, and students of another race (25%) report higher rates of bullying than their peers.

The percentage of 7th graders who have been bullied on school property in the past year has increased from 14% in 2023 to 23% in 2025, while the percentage of 8th graders had remained level.



Related Findings

Electronic Bullying: 10% of all middle school students have been bullied electronically. Black students (18%) and students of another race (18%) report higher rates of electronic bullying than their peers. The percentage of 7th grade students who have been electronically bullied in the past year has increased since 2023 (from 7% to 11%), while the percentage among 8th graders has remained level.



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race.

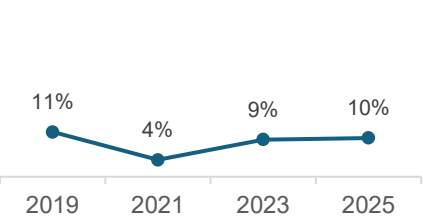
BULLYING: HIGH SCHOOL

10% of all high school students were bullied on school property in 2025.

TGD students (31%), students of another race (18%), and LGBTQ+ students (17%) report higher rates of bullying than their peers.

Since 2023, the percentage of 9th grade students who were bullied on school property in the past year increased from 3% in 2023 to 15% in 2025, the percentage of 10th graders has remained level, and the percentage of 11th and 12th graders (both at 12% in 2023) has decreased.

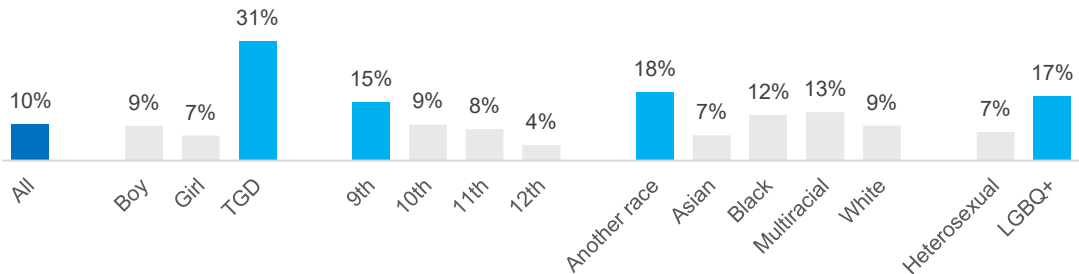
Trend, Bullied at School



Related Findings

Electronic Bullying: 11% of all high school students have been bullied electronically. TGD (16%), Black (21%), and LGBTQ+ (15%) students report higher rates of electronic bullying than their peers. The percentage of ninth grade students who have been electronically bullied in the past year has greatly increased (3% of students in 2023 compared to 18% in 2025), while the percentage among other students has remained more level.

Bullied on school property, past year (n= 948-1001)



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race.

SEXUAL and DATING VIOLENCE: MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

In the past year, 5% of high school students (51 students) experienced sexual violence.

10% of high school students (101 students) have experienced forced or pressured sexual activity in their lifetime.

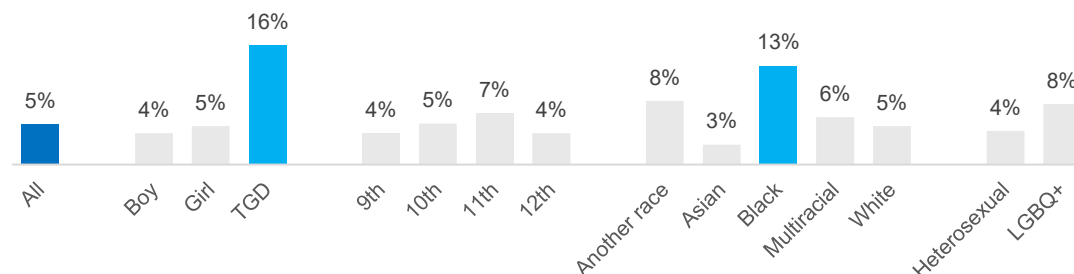
Among high school students who are dating, 7% have experienced sexual violence, 6% have experienced physical abuse, and 19% have experienced emotional abuse.

Related Findings

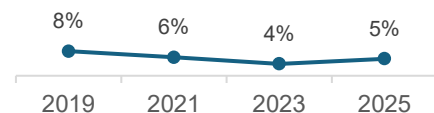
Middle School:

5% of middle school students (32 students) have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Among middle school students who are dating, 5% have experienced sexual violence by a partner, 3% have experienced physical abuse, and 13% have experienced emotional abuse.

Forced/pressured sexual activity, High School, past year (n= 918-964)



Trend, Forced/Pressured Sex, High School



TGD includes students who are transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, gender expansive, and questioning
Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race.

CROSS ANALYSES

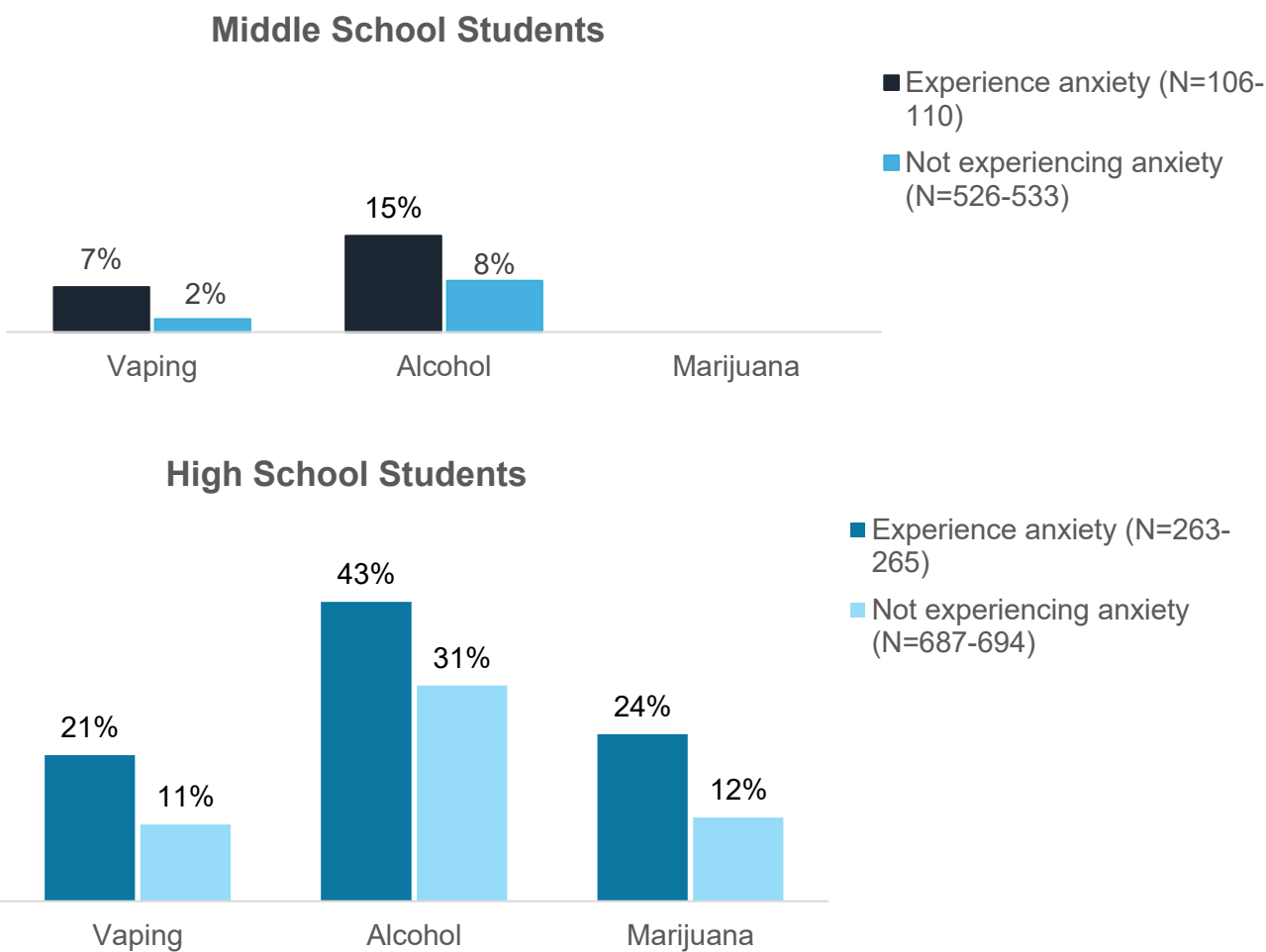
SUBSTANCE USE x ANXIETY
SUBSTANCE USE x DEPRESSION
SUBSTANCE USE x CONSIDER
SUICIDE

LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE ANXIETY: MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who don't experience anxiety are less likely to use substances.

Among middle school students who experience anxiety, 7% vape and 15% consume alcohol. Marijuana numbers are too low to report.

Among high school students who experience anxiety, 21% vape, 43% consume alcohol, and 24% use marijuana.

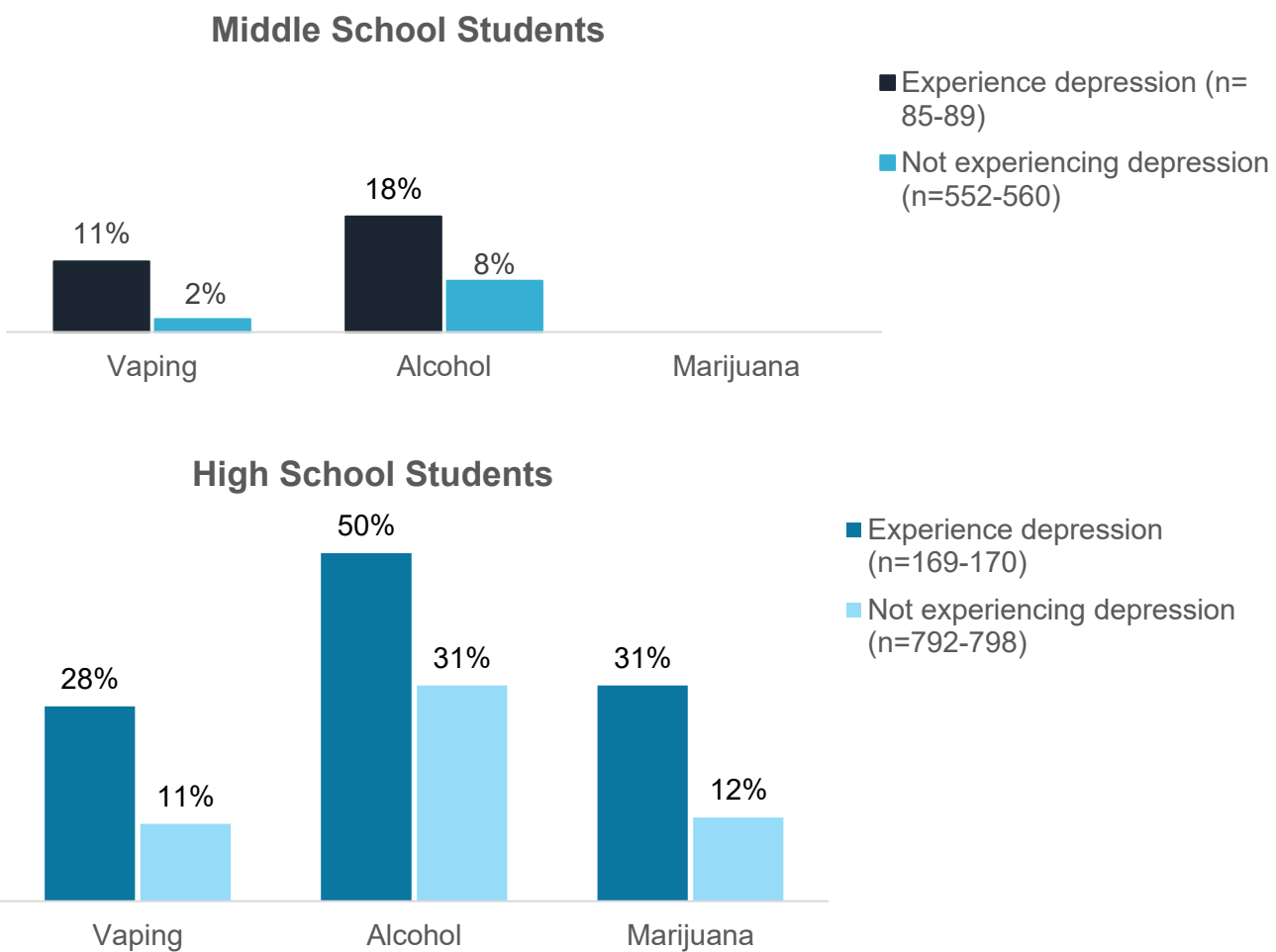


LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED DEPRERSSION: MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who don't experience depression are less likely to use substances.

Among middle school students who experience depression, 11% vape and 18% consume alcohol. Marijuana numbers are too low to report.

Among high school students who experience depression, 28% vape, 50% consume alcohol, and 31% use marijuana.

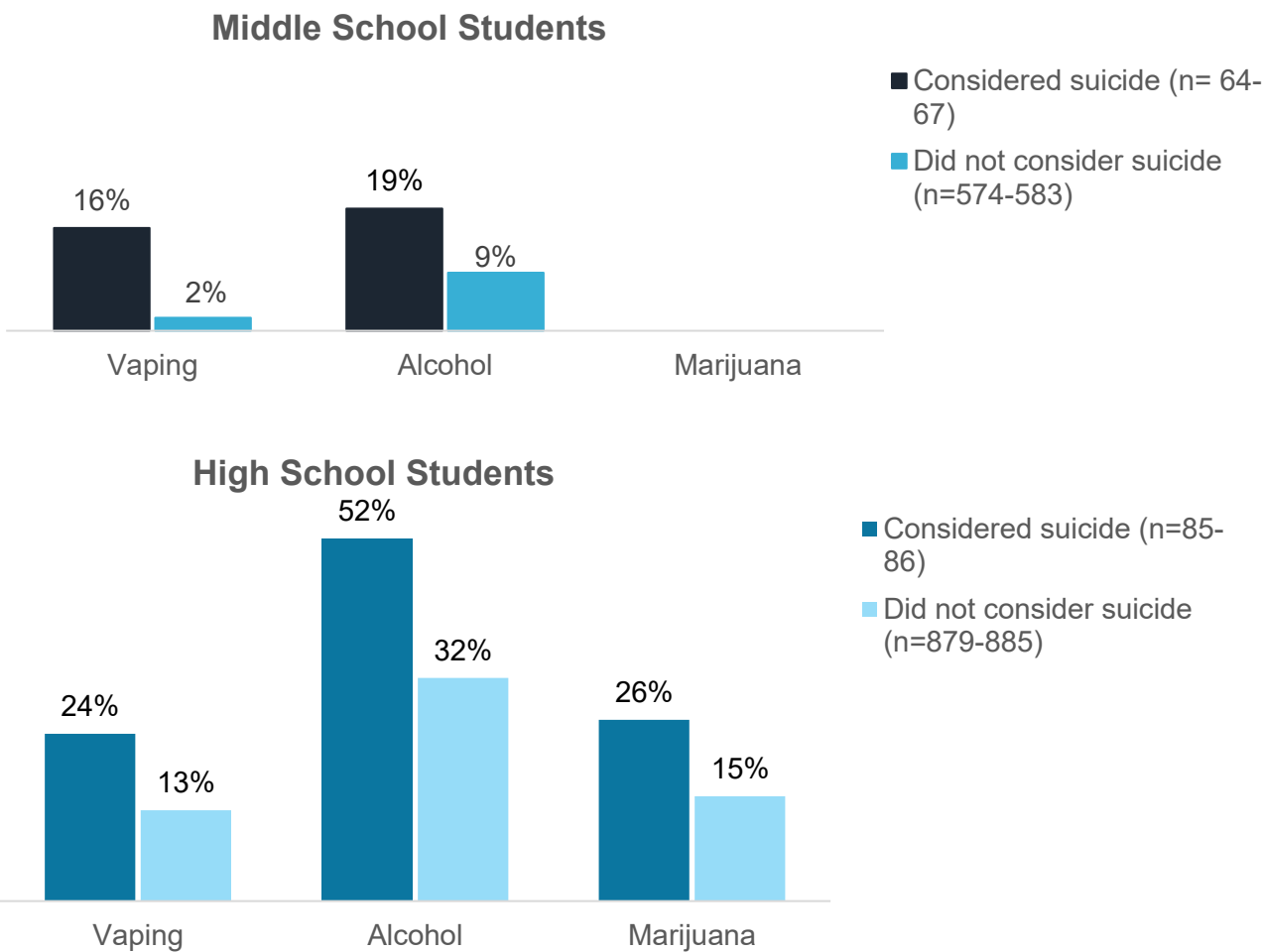


LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO CONSIDER SUICIDE, MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who have not considered suicide are less likely to use substances.

Among middle school students who consider suicide, 16% vape and 19% consume alcohol. Marijuana numbers are too low to report.

Among high school students who considered suicide, 24% vape, 52% consume alcohol, and 26% use marijuana.



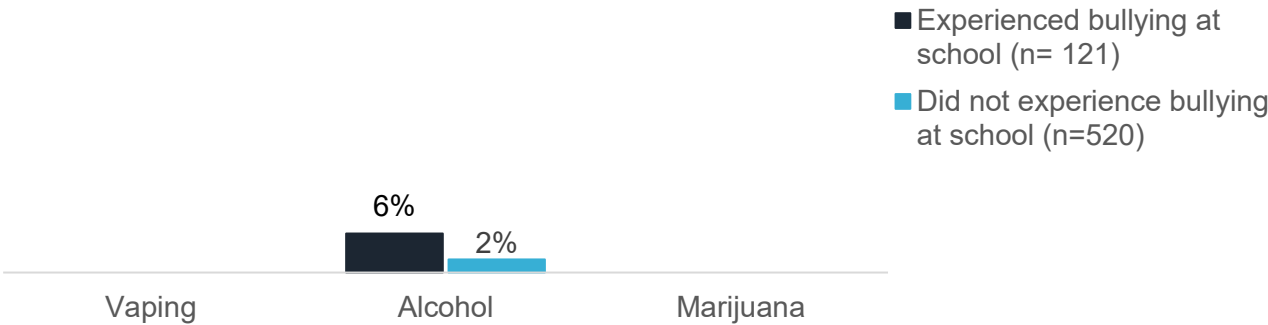
CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE BULLYING AT SCHOOL, MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who have not been bullied at school are less likely to use substances.

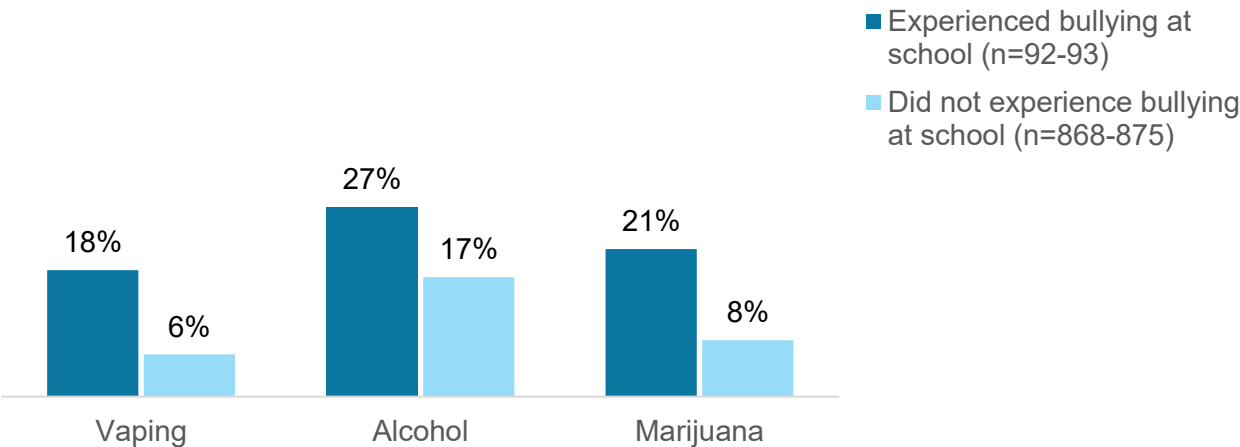
Among middle school students who experienced bullying at school, 6% consume alcohol. Marijuana and vaping numbers are too low to report.

Among high school students who experienced bullying at school, 18% vape, 27% consume alcohol, and 21% use marijuana.

Middle School Students



High School Students



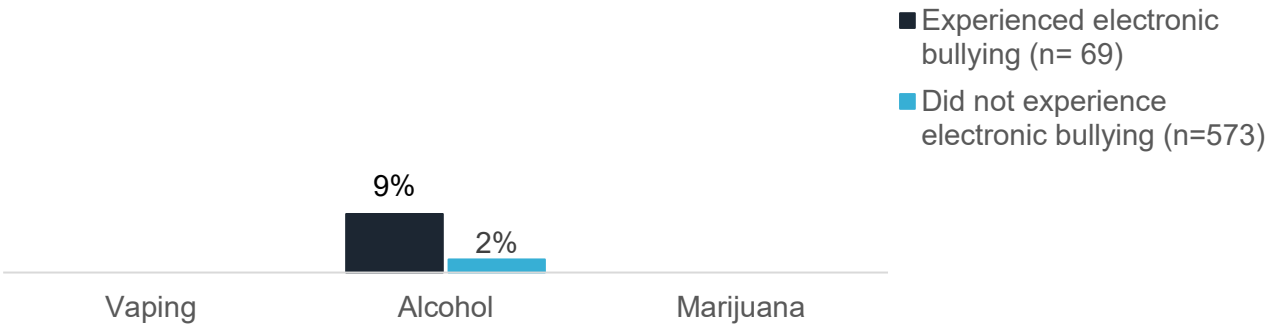
CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE ELECTRONIC BULLYING, MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who have not been bullied electronically are less likely to use substances.

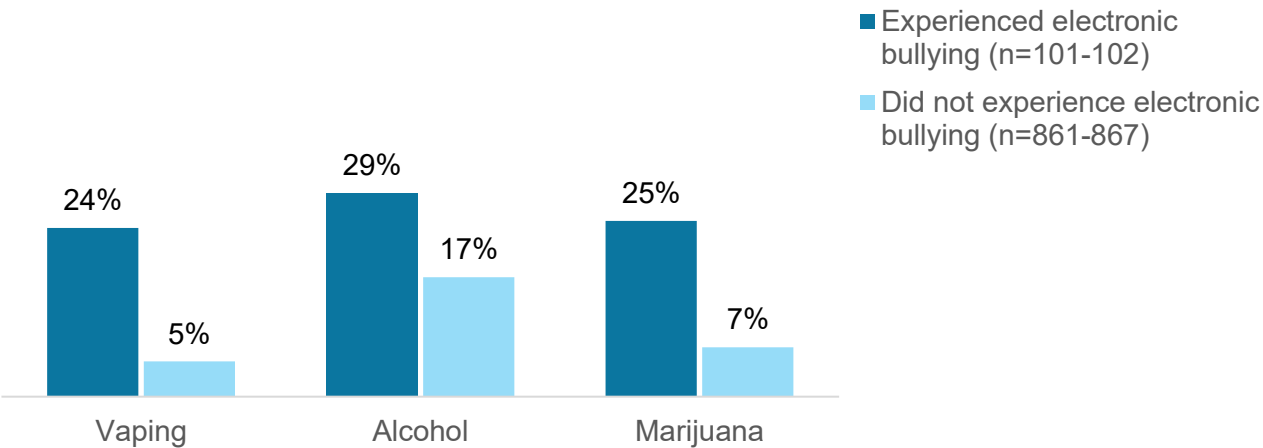
Among middle school students who experienced electronic bullying, 9% consume alcohol. Marijuana and vaping numbers are too low to report.

Among high school students who experienced electronic bullying, 24% vape, 29% consume alcohol, and 25% use marijuana.

Middle School Students



High School Students

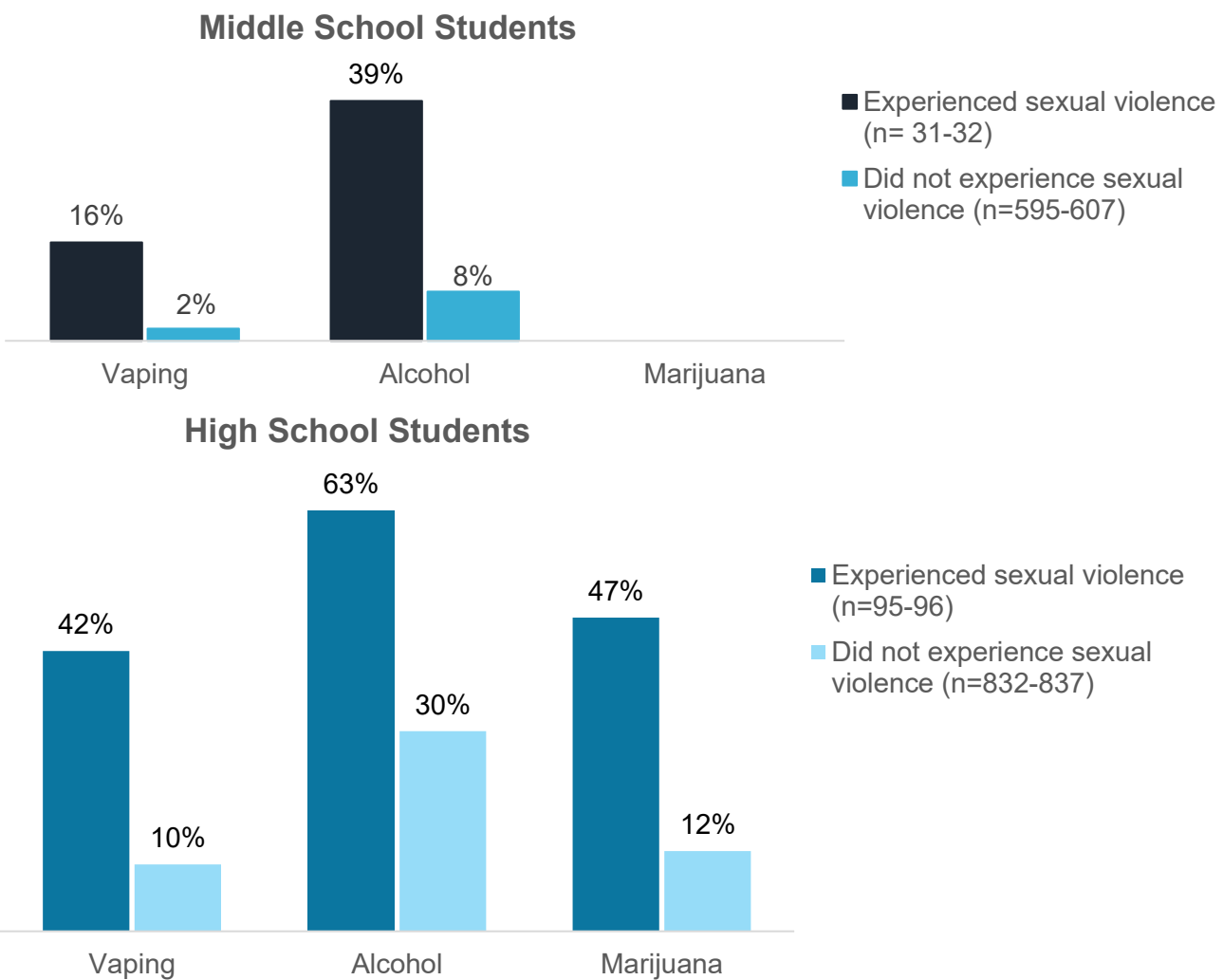


LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE, MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Those who have not experienced sexual violence are less likely to use substances.

Among middle school students who have experienced sexual violence, 16% have vaped and 39% have consumed alcohol in their lifetime. Marijuana numbers are too low to report.

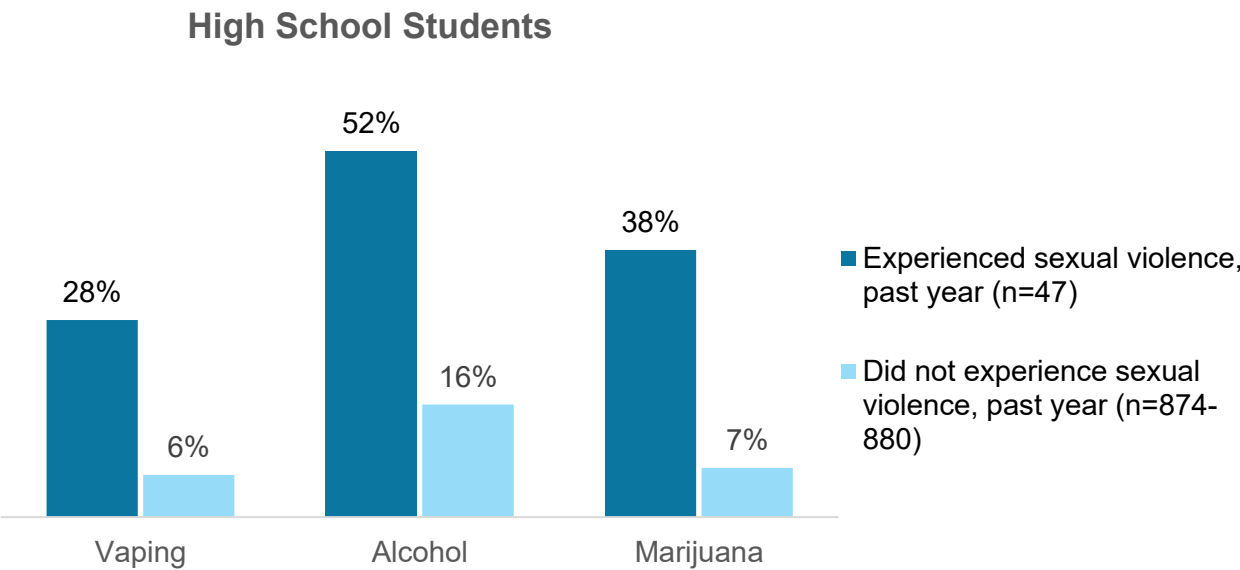
Among high school students who have experienced sexual violence, 42% vaped, 63% consumed alcohol, and 47% used marijuana.



CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (past year), HIGH SCHOOL

High school students who have not experienced sexual violence in the past year are less likely to currently use substances.

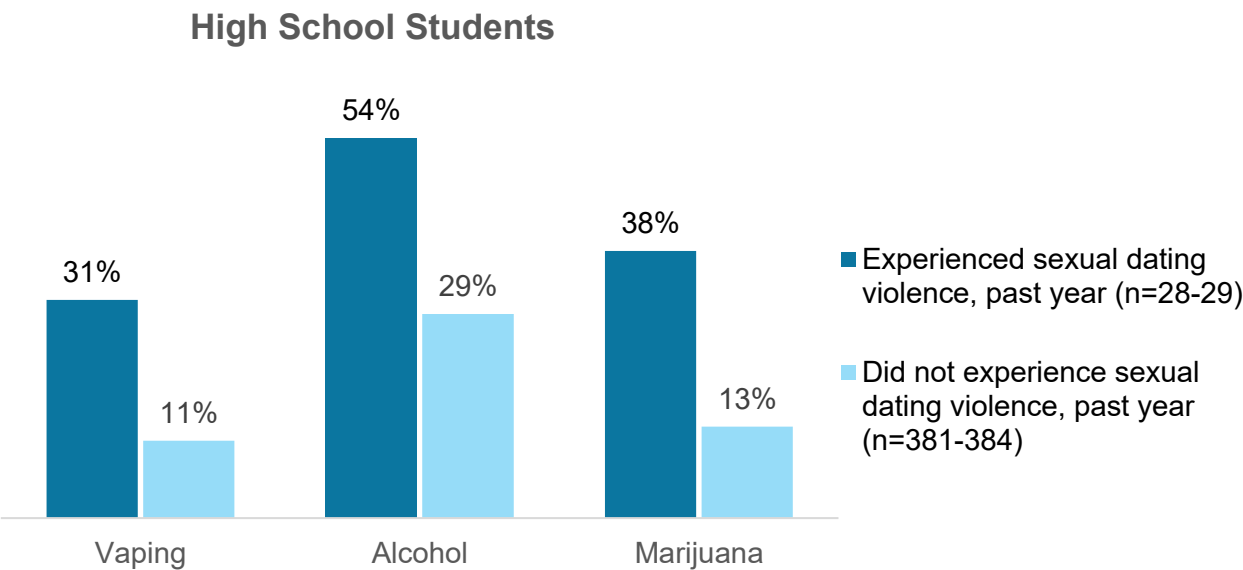
Among high school students who experienced any sexual violence in the past year, 28% vape, 52% consume alcohol, and 38% use marijuana.



CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL DATING VIOLENCE (past year), HIGH SCHOOL

High school students who have not experienced sexual violence in the past year from a partner are less likely to currently use substances.

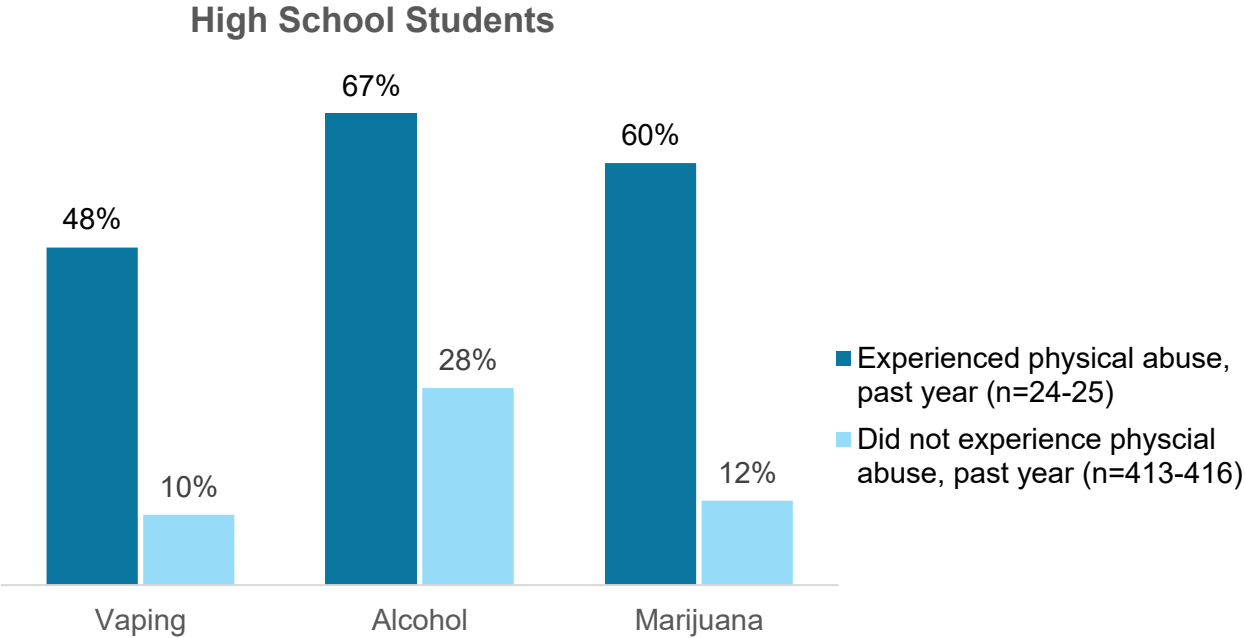
Among high school students who experienced sexual abuse in the past year, 31% vape, 54% consume alcohol, and 38% use marijuana.



CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL DATING VIOLENCE (past year), HIGH SCHOOL

High school students who have not experienced physical violence from a partner in the past year are less likely to currently use substances.

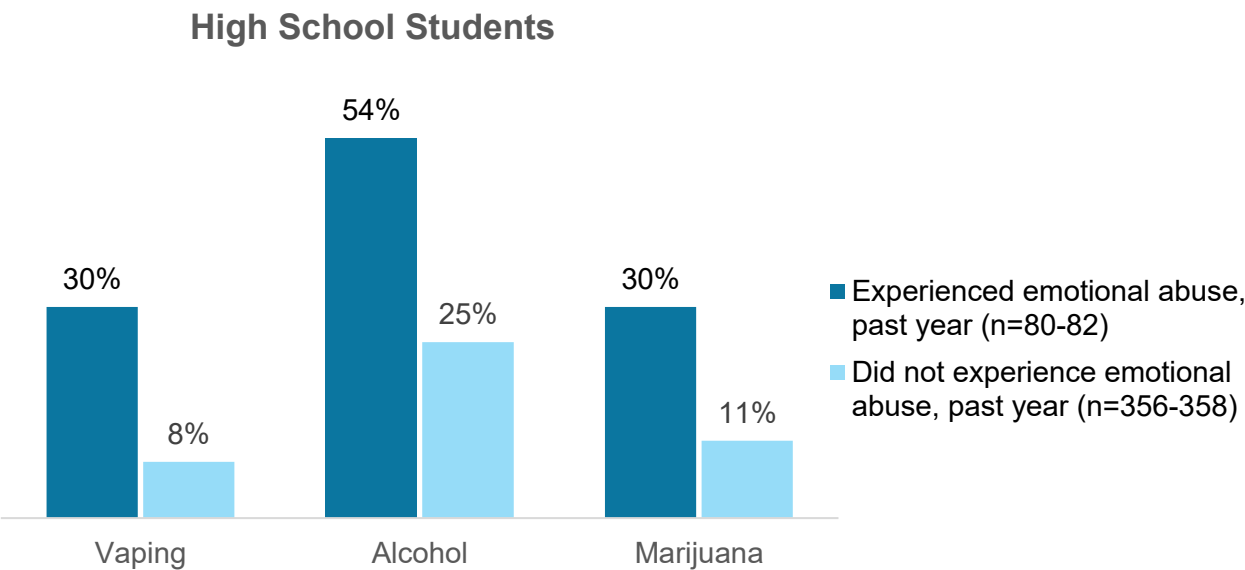
Among high school students who experienced physical abuse in the past year, 48% vape, 67% consume alcohol, and 60% use marijuana.



CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED EMOTIONAL DATING VIOLENCE (past year), HIGH SCHOOL

High school students who have not experienced emotional abuse in the past year from a partner are less likely to currently use substances.

Among high school students who experienced emotional abuse from a partner in the past year, 30% vape, 54% consume alcohol, and 30% use marijuana.



APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY

SURVEY PROCESS AND RESPONSE

The YRBS is administered during the spring semester to all students (i.e. census sampling) on a date and class period designated by each school. The survey is administered by teachers with support from school administrators and the Belmont Wellness Coalition.

Completion of the survey is voluntary and anonymous. Parents are informed of the survey in advance and given the option to opt out.

In 2025, all students took the survey online through a link provided by their teacher under test administration protocol. Survey was offered online using a survey platform called Alchemer. Students were able to choose between English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Belmont's YRBS instruments are adapted from the 2025 CDC and Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.

For 2025 implementation, John Snow, Inc., Data + Soul Research, BPS leadership, and BWC worked closely together to review and recommend changes to both high school and middle school instruments. General revisions were made to the survey instrument to clarify meaning, support lower reading levels, use relevant language, and align between MS and HS and four-town W2B2 coalition.

The 2025 YRBS included the following changes relative to 2023:

Disaggregation: Sample sizes under 10 were not disaggregated to protect student anonymity.

Gender: Used MYRBS version of gender question, which includes language about cisgender and transgender.

The 2025 High School YRBS contains 109 questions.

The 2025 Middle School YRBS contains 98 questions.

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Grade:** What grade are you in now?
- **Age:** How old are you?
- **Gender (select one):** Which of the following terms best describes your current gender identity? We understand that there are many different ways you may identify, please pick the one that best describes you.
 - Cisgender girl or woman
 - Cisgender boy or man
 - Transgender girl or woman
 - Transgender boy or man
 - Nonbinary or Genderqueer
 - I don't know what this question means
 - I prefer not to answer
- **Sexual orientation (select one):** Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? We understand that there are many different ways you may identify, please pick the one that best describes you.
 - Straight or heterosexual
 - Lesbian or gay
 - Asexual
 - Bisexual
 - Pansexual
 - Queer
 - Questioning
 - I don't know what this question means
 - I prefer not to answer
- **Race (choose all that apply):** What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - American Indian or Alaska Native: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Asian: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Black or African American: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Hispanic or Latino: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Middle Eastern or North African: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - White: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.
 - Another race, please specify: What is your race? You can choose more than one answer.

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: SUBSTANCE USE (ALCOHOL)

- **Lifetime alcohol use:** How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol (more than a few sips)?
- **Current alcohol use:** During the past month, did you have at least one drink of alcohol (more than a few sips)? (MS) / During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol (more than a few sips)? (HS)
- **Ease of access, alcohol:** alcohol?:If you wanted to, how easy would it be for you to get:
- **Self perception of risk of alcohol use:** have one or two drinks of alcohol nearly every day?:How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways), if they:
- **Method of access, alcohol:**
 - I bought it from a supermarket or a convenience store: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I buy it from a supermarket or a convenience store : There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I bought it from a liquor store or package store: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I buy it from a liquor store or package store : There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I bought it from bars or clubs or restaurants: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I buy it from bars or clubs or restaurants: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I had someone else buy it for me: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I have someone else buy it for me: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I got it through my friends: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I get it through my friends: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I got it at home: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I get it at home: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
 - I got it at parties: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How did you get alcohol? (MS) / I get it at parties: There are many different ways to get beer, wine, liquor, or spiked seltzers How do you get alcohol? (HS)
- **Perception of lifetime substance use (MS):** Alcohol: What percentage of students at your school do you think have ever used the following substances?
- **Perception of current substance use (HS):** Alcohol: During the past 30 days, what percentage of students at your school do you think used the following substances?

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: SUBSTANCE USE (MARIJUANA)

- **Lifetime marijuana use:** How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?
- **Current marijuana use:** During the past month, did you use marijuana? (MS) / During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana? (HS)
- **Ease of access, marijuana:** marijuana?:If you wanted to, how easy would it be for you to get:
- **Self perception of risk of marijuana use:** use marijuana once or twice a week?:How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways), if they:
- **Method of access, marijuana (HS):**
 - I bought it myself from a store: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought it myself from someone else: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I got it at home with permission from a parent or family member over the age of 21: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I took it at home without permission from a parent or family member over the age of 21: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I took it at some other place without permission: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I got it from friends: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I got it from parties: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
 - I got it some other way: During the past 30 days, how did you get marijuana that you used? You can choose more than one answer
- **Perception of lifetime substance use (MS):** Marijuana: What percentage of students at your school do you think have ever used the following substances?
- **Perception of current substance use (HS):** Marijuana: During the past 30 days, what percentage of students at your school do you think used the following substances?

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: SUBSTANCE USE (VAPING)

- **Lifetime vape use:** How old were you when you used an electronic vapor product (vape) for the first time, even one or two puffs?
- **Current vape use:** During the past month, did you vape? (MS) / During the past 30 days, on how many days did you vape? (HS)
- **Ease of access, vape products:** vape products?:If you wanted to, how easy would it be for you to get:
- **Self perception of risk of electronic vapor use:** use a vape product every day?:How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways), if they:
- **Substance vaped:**
 - Nicotine: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / Nicotine: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - Marijuana, marijuana concentrates, marijuana waxes, THC, delta-8 THC, or hash oils: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / Marijuana, marijuana concentrates, marijuana waxes, THC, delta-8 THC, or hash oils: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - CBD: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / CBD: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - Essential Oils: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / Essential Oils: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - Caffeine: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / Caffeine: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - Other substance: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / Other substance: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
 - I'm not sure: During the past month, what substances did you vape? (MS) / I don't know: What types of substances did you vape in the past 30 days? You can choose more than one answer (HS)
- **Method of access, electronic vapor products (HS):**
 - I got them from a friend, family member, or someone else: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought them from a friend, family member, or someone else: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought them myself in a vape shop or tobacco shop: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought them myself in a convenience store, supermarket, discount store, or gas station: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought them myself at a mall or shopping center kiosk or stand: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I bought them myself online: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I took them from a store or another person: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
 - I got them in some other way: During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your vape products? You can choose more than one answer
- **Perception of lifetime substance use (MS):** Vape products: What percentage of students at your school do you think have ever used the following substances?
- **Perception of current substance use (HS):** Vape products: During the past 30 days, what percentage of students at your school do you think used the following substances?

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

- **Stress:** During the past 12 months, how often did your stress feel overwhelming?
- **Cause of stress:**
 - school issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / school issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - social issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / social issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - appearance issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / appearance issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - health issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / health issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - family issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / family issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - social justice issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / social justice issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - future issues?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / future issues?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
 - feeling unsafe due to violence in my community?: During the past month, how often did you worry about: (MS) / feeling unsafe due to violence in my community?: During the past 30 days, how often did you worry about: (HS)
- **Depression:** During the past year, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (MS) / During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (HS)
- **Anxiety:** During the past month, did you ever feel tense, nervous, or worried every day for two or more weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (MS) / During the past 30 days, did you ever feel tense, nervous, or worried every day for two or more weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? (HS)
- **Self-harm:** During the past 12 months, how many times did you hurt or injure yourself on purpose without wanting to die? For example, by cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose.
- **Consider attempting suicide:** During the past year, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide? (MS) / During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide? (HS)
- **Make a suicide plan:** During the past year, did you make a suicide plan? (MS) / During the past 12 months, did you make a suicide plan? (HS)
- **Coping strategy:** Do you have a healthy activity or behavior (coping strategy) that helps you relieve stress?

TEXT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS: PERSONAL SAFETY

- **Bullied on school property:** During the past year, have you been bullied on school property? (MS) / During the past 12 months, have you been bullied on school property? (HS)
- **Electronic bullying:** During the past year, have you been bullied electronically? (MS) / During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied electronically? (HS)
- **Sexual violence**
 - **Lifetime experience of sexual violence:** Has anyone ever done sexual things to you or forced you to do sexual things that you did not want to? This includes things like pressuring you to take part in unwanted kissing, touching, or other types of sexual contact.
 - **Sexual violence, past year (High school ONLY):** During the past 12 months, did anyone force you to do sexual things that you did not want to? This includes things like pressuring you to take part in unwanted kissing, touching, or other types of sexual contact.
- **Relationship abuse (middle school):**
 - **Lifetime sexual abuse by a partner:** Has someone you were dating or going out with ever done sexual things to you or forced you to do sexual things that you did not want to? This includes things like pressuring you to take part in unwanted kissing, touching, or other types of sexual contact.
 - **Lifetime physical abuse by a partner:** Has someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you? This includes being hurt by being shoved, slapped, hit, kicked, or forced into sexual activity.
 - **Lifetime emotional abuse by a partner:** Has someone you were dating or going out with tried to control you or emotionally hurt you? This includes checking your phone, calling or texting you many times a day to see where you are, stopping you from hanging out with friends, getting mad if you talk to someone else, or not letting you go to school.
- **Relationship abuse (high school):**
 - **Past year sexual abuse by a partner:** During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to? This includes things like pressuring you to take part in unwanted kissing, touching, or other types of sexual contact.
 - **Past year physical abuse by a partner:** During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you? This includes being hurt by being shoved, slapped, hit, kicked, or forced into sexual activity.
 - **Past year emotional abuse by a partner:** During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with try to control you or emotionally hurt you? This includes monitoring your cell phone use, calling or texting you multiple times a day to monitor where you are, preventing you from doing things with friends, getting angry if you were talking to someone else, or preventing you from going to school.