



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



Belmont Wellness Coalition Presenters

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Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The YRBS is a national survey that measures health risk behaviors among youth.

Understanding the prevalence of these behaviors helps us develop intervention and outreach efforts.

Belmont YRBS:

- Opt-in survey for grade 7-12 students
- Administered biannually by BPS and BWC
- Most recently administered in April 2025

Reports on:

- Student demographics
- Substance use
- Mental health and wellness
- Personal safety

Middlesex League Participants

Belmont's cohort for comparing data...

- Arlington
- **Belmont**
- Burlington
- Melrose
- Reading
- Stoneham
- Wakefield
- Watertown
- Wilmington
- Winchester
- Woburn



Survey Response Rates

Middle School

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

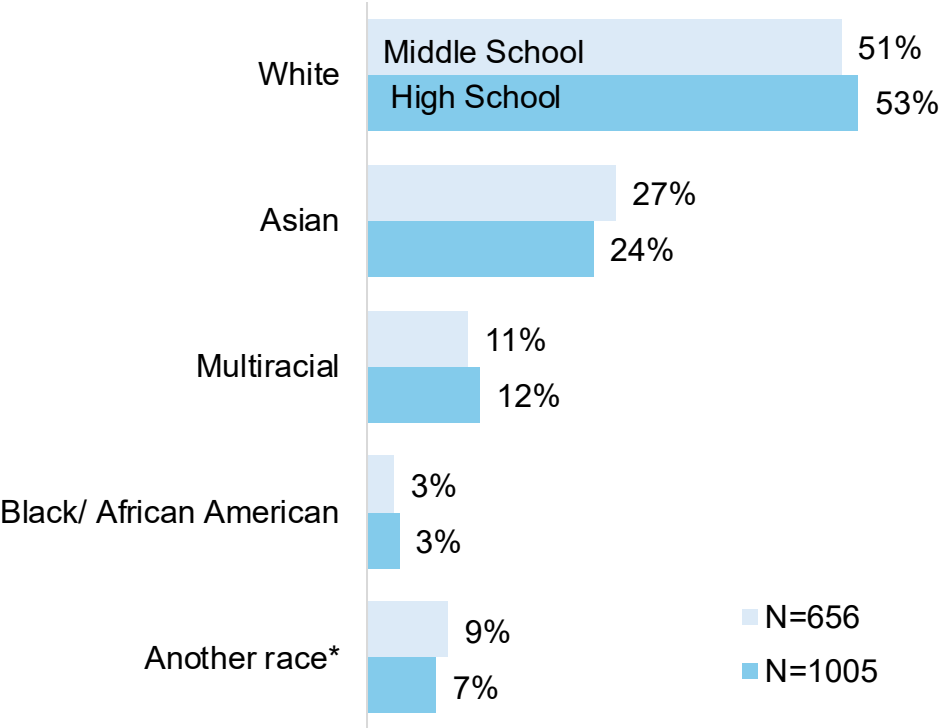
High School

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

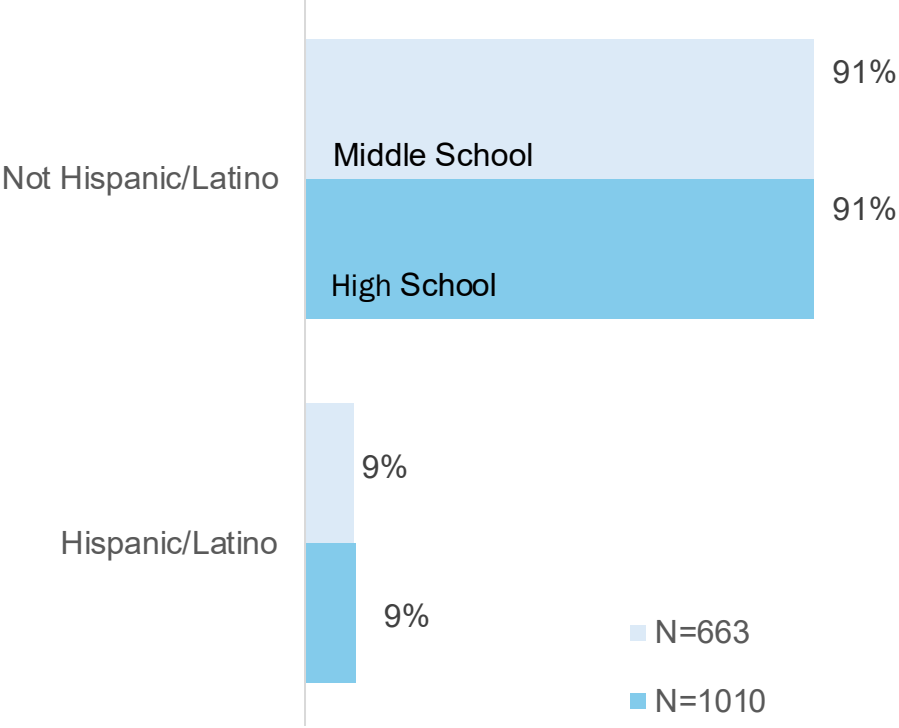
* Compared to full class count, per DESE enrollment data

Respondent Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

Race



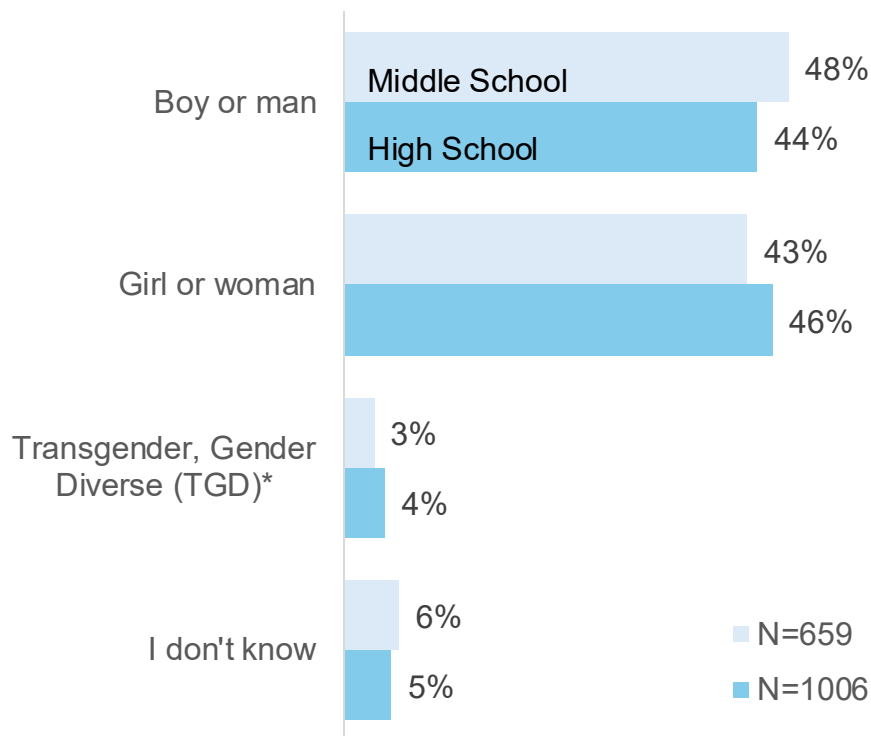
Ethnicity



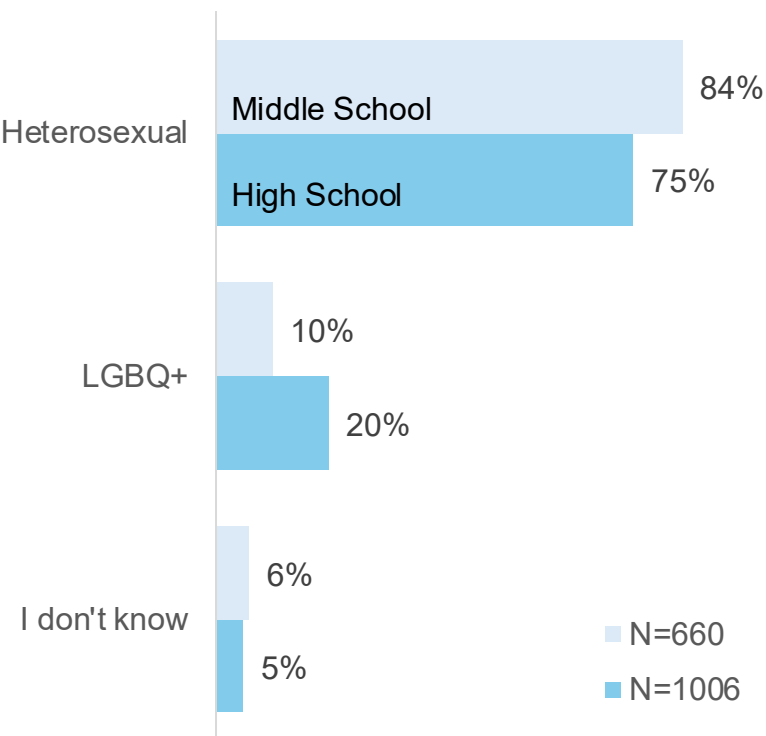
*Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race. Hispanic/Latino are included in race to be consistent with new census categories for race.

Respondent Demographics: Gender/Sexual Orientation

Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



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

How to Read These Slides

Middle School
data

High School
data

Middle / High
School data

LEFT BOX:

Overall rates and trends

Down arrow = Trend overall decreased
Up arrow = Trend overall increased
Flat, grey line = Trend overall remained consistent

RIGHT BOX:

**Key populations and areas
for targeted focus**

**Groups that reported rates
5% or more than the overall
rate**

SUBSTANCE USE

ALCOHOL
MARIJUANA
VAPING

Alcohol Use: Middle School

Since 2019, “current alcohol use” (past 30-day use) has remained level among middle schoolers.

In 2025, 3% of middle schoolers reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

In middle school, highest rates of drinking are reported by:

- **Black students**
- **Students of another race**

Alcohol Use: High School

Since 2021, current alcohol use has remained level among high schoolers.

In 2025, 18% of high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

In high school, drinking is more common among:

- **TGD students**
- **Girl students**
- **Students in grades 11/12**
- **Multiracial students**

Marijuana Use: Middle School

Since 2019, current marijuana use has remained consistent among middle schoolers – fluctuating between 1% and 2%.

In middle school, current marijuana use is so low that key populations cannot be highlighted, to protect student anonymity.

Marijuana Use: High School

Since 2019, current marijuana use among high schoolers has decreased by 44%.

In 2025, 9% reported marijuana use.

In high school, higher rates of marijuana use are reported among:

- **TGD students**
- **Black students**
- **Multiracial students**
- **LGBQ+ students**

... and increase by grade



Electronic Vapor Use: Middle School

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

In middle school, current vaping use is so low that key populations cannot be highlighted, to protect student anonymity.

Electronic Vapor Use: High School

Since 2019, current electronic vapor use among high schoolers has decreased by 63%.

7% of high school students report current use.

In high school, electronic vapor use is more common among:

- **TGD students**
- **Black students**
- **Multiracial students**
- **Students in grades 11/12**



Perception of Rates of Substance Use

Other than alcohol, middle schoolers believe that more of their peers have used substances than their peers actually report.

High schoolers believe that more of their peers are currently using substances than their peers actually report.

MENTAL HEALTH and WELLNESS

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

Overwhelming Stress

**16% of middle schoolers
and
24% of high schoolers

experienced frequent
overwhelming stress this
past year.**

**Groups who report higher
rates of overwhelming
stress include:**

- **TGD students**
- **Girl students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Students of another race**
- **Black students (MS only)**
- **11th graders (HS only)**

Top Stressors

Among *both* middle and high schoolers, top stressors are:

- **School issues**
- **Future issues**
- **Appearance issues**

Depression

**14% of middle schoolers
and
17% of high schoolers
experienced depressive
symptoms in the past 12
months. Both are
decreases.**

**Groups who report higher
rates of depression than
their peers overall include:**

- **TGD students**
- **Black students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Students of another race**
- **Girl students (MS only)**



Anxiety

Middle School: overall rates of anxiety have decreased from 24% to 17% since 2023.

High School: overall rates of anxiety have decreased from 33% to 28% since 2023.

Anxiety is reported at higher rates among:

- **TGD students**
- **Black students**
- **Students of another race**
- **LGBQ+ students**



Self-Harm

In the past year, 12% of middle schoolers (80) and 11% of high schoolers (111) *“hurt or injured themselves on purpose, without wanting to die.”*

This is consistent with reported rates from 2023.

Highest rates of self-harm are reported among:

- **TDG students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Multiracial students (HS only)**
- **Black students (HS only)**

Suicide: Middle School

10% of middle schoolers (67) have seriously considered attempting suicide.

5% (32) have made a suicide plan – both decreases since 2021.

In middle school, students who report highest rates of suicide ideation include:

- **TGD students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Black students**
- **Students of another race**



Suicide: High School

**9% of high schoolers (86)
have seriously considered
attempting suicide.**

**4% (40) have made a suicide
plan – both *slight* decreases
since 2021.**

**High schoolers who report
highest rates of suicide
ideation include:**

- **TGD students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Black students**

Coping Strategies

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

**Having a coping strategy is
defined as a Yes response:
*“Do you have a healthy
activity or behavior (coping
strategy) that helps you
relieve stress?”* Other
options were “No” and “I
don’t know.”**

PERSONAL SAFETY

BULLYING
SEXUAL and DATING
VIOLENCE

Bullying: Middle School

In 2025, 19% of middle schoolers were bullied on school property; 10% of middle schoolers were bullied electronically. This is consistent with reported rates from 2023.

Groups who reported the highest rates of bullying include:

- **Black students**
- **Grade 7 students**
- **Students of another race**
- **TGD students (in person)**
- **LGBQ+ students (in person)**

Bullying: High School

In 2025, 10% of high schoolers were bullied on school property; 11% of high schoolers were bullied electronically. This is consistent with reported rates from 2023.

Groups who reported higher rates of bullying include:

- **TGD students**
- **LGBQ+ students**
- **Grade 9 students**
- **Black students (electronic)**
- **Students of another race (in person)**

Sexual / Dating Violence: Middle School

**5% of middle schoolers
have experienced sexual
violence in their lifetime.**

**Among middle schoolers
who are dating:**

- 5% experienced sexual violence by a partner**
- 3% experienced physical abuse**
- 13% experienced emotional abuse**

Sexual / Dating Violence: High School

10% of high schoolers have experienced forced or pressured sexual activity in their lifetime.

In the past year, 5% of high schoolers experienced sexual violence.

Among high schoolers who are dating:

- 7% have experienced sexual violence**
- 6% have experienced physical abuse**
- 19% have experienced emotional abuse**

CROSS ANALYSES

SUBSTANCE USE x
ANXIETY

SUBSTANCE USE x
DEPRESSION

SUBSTANCE USE x
CONSIDER SUICIDE

Cross-Analysis Findings

Students who:

- experienced anxiety
- experienced depression
- considered suicide
- experienced bullying at school or electronically
- experienced sexual or dating violence

... are more likely to use substances.

Take Aways

- Rates of mental health issues are improving overall.
- Substance use has remained *mostly* level since 2021 and is particularly low among middle school students.
- Substance use and mental health rates are higher among:
 - Trans/gender diverse students
 - LGBTQ+ students
 - Black students
 - Multiracial students
 - Students of another race
- Rates of bullying have remained level for most grades, but have *increased* for grades 7 and 9.

Next Steps

1. Take time to absorb the data.
2. Meet with Key Stakeholders.
3. Review health curriculum to further address areas of concern (bullying, perception of risk, sexual violence, healthy coping strategies).
4. Together with School Department and key stakeholders, identify and develop programming/ interventions for students and families, including key populations.

Questions / Discussion

THANK YOU!
