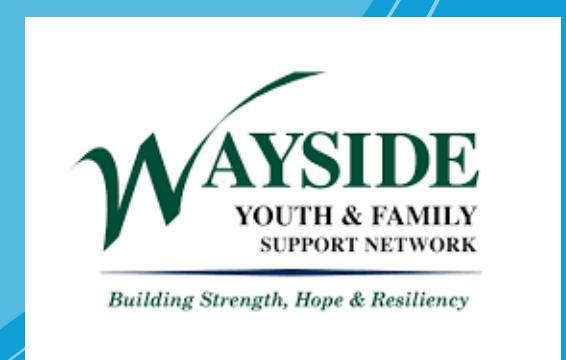




# Belmont Middle and High School 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data Highlights

DATA + SOUL  
RESEARCH



# Belmont Wellness Coalition Presenters

**Lisa Gibalerio (she/her)**

MPH, Coalition Director

**Wendy Conroy (she/her)**

MPH, Coalition Chair

**Molly Pistrang-Gomes (she/her)**

M.Ed., Evaluator

## BHS Students:

**Caroline French (she/her)**

Senior

**Beilun Gu (she/her)**

Sophomore

# 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 <sup>th</sup>	338	90%
8 <sup>th</sup>	321	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>89%</b>

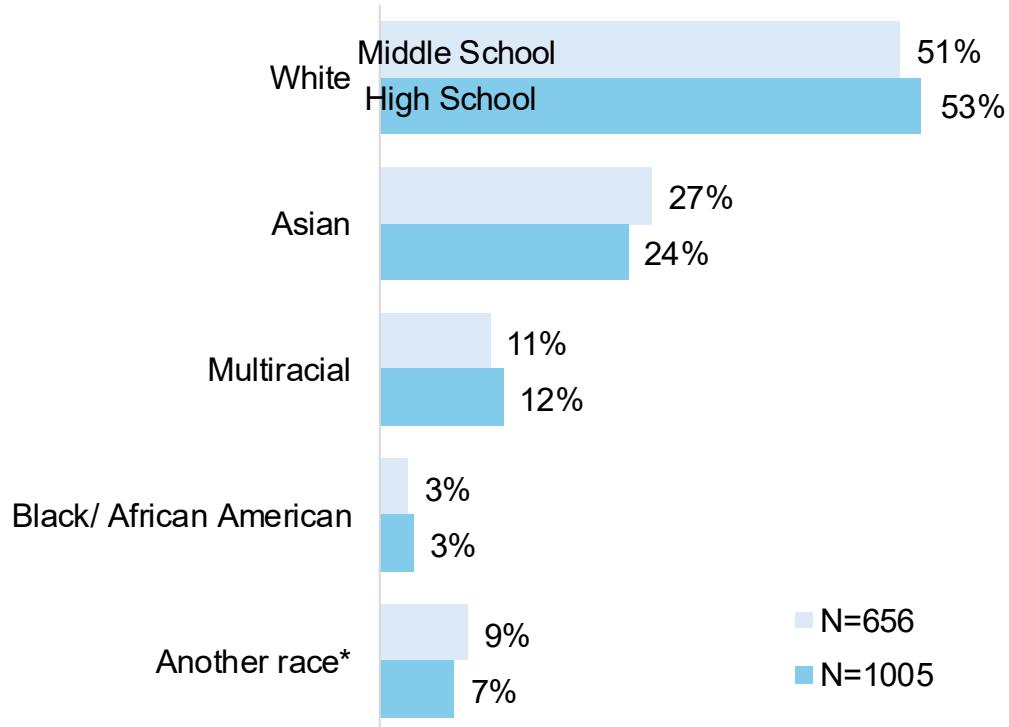
## High School

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

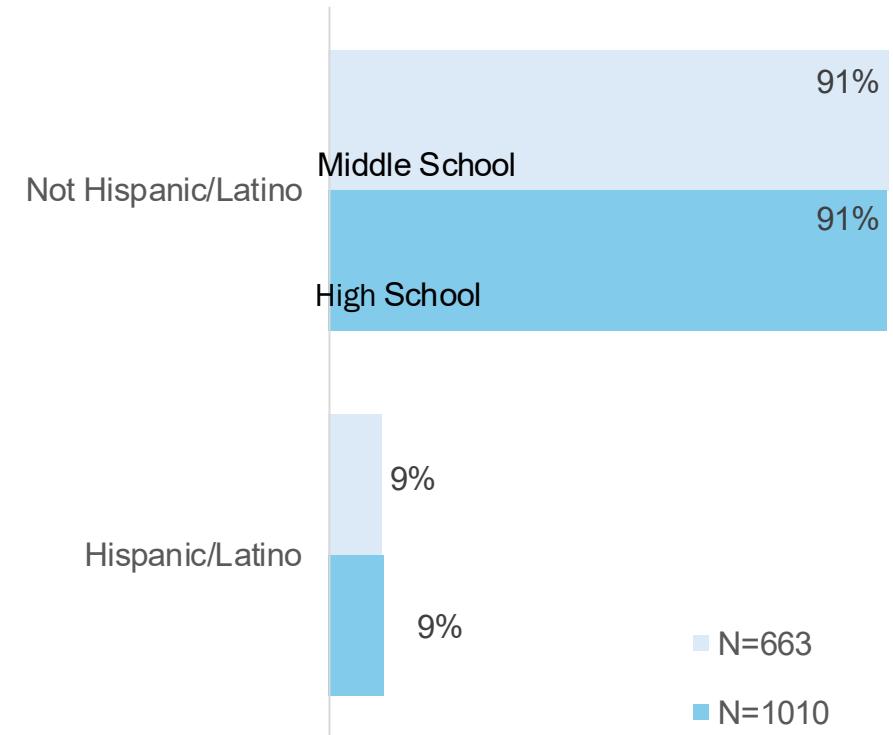
\* Compared to full class count, per DESE enrollment data

# Respondent Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

## Race



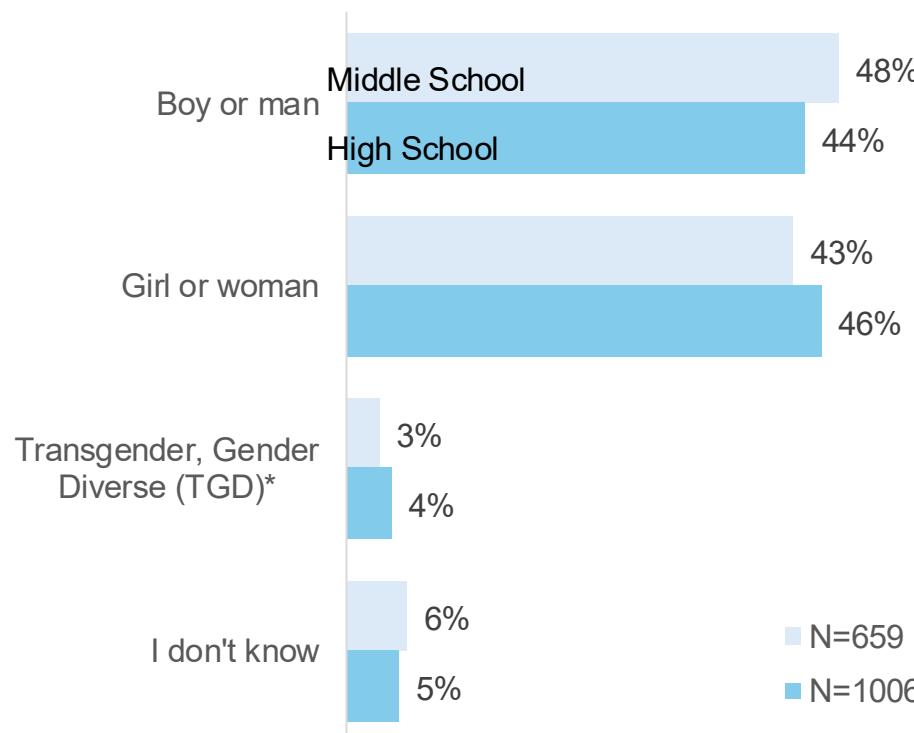
## Ethnicity



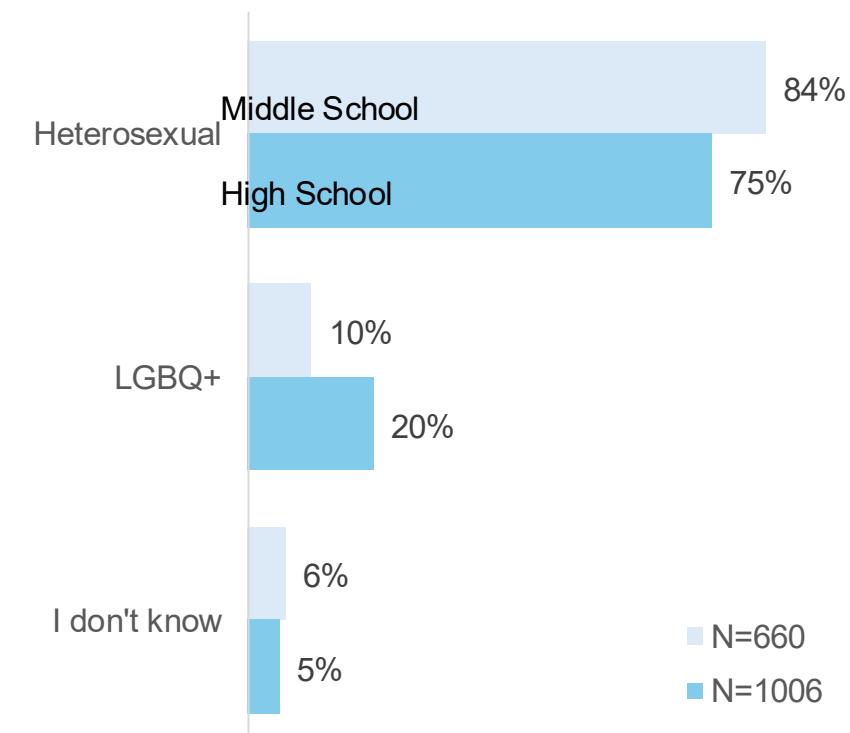
\*Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race. Hispanic/Latino are included in race to be consistent with new census categories for race.

# 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 the Slides

Middle School  
Data

High School  
Data

Middle and High  
School Data

## LEFT BOX:

### Overall rates and trends

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

## RIGHT BOX:

**Key populations and areas  
for targeted focus**

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

\* Some demographic groups are small, so interpretation of enhanced rates can be complicated. We report the groups that meet the above criteria, without analysis.

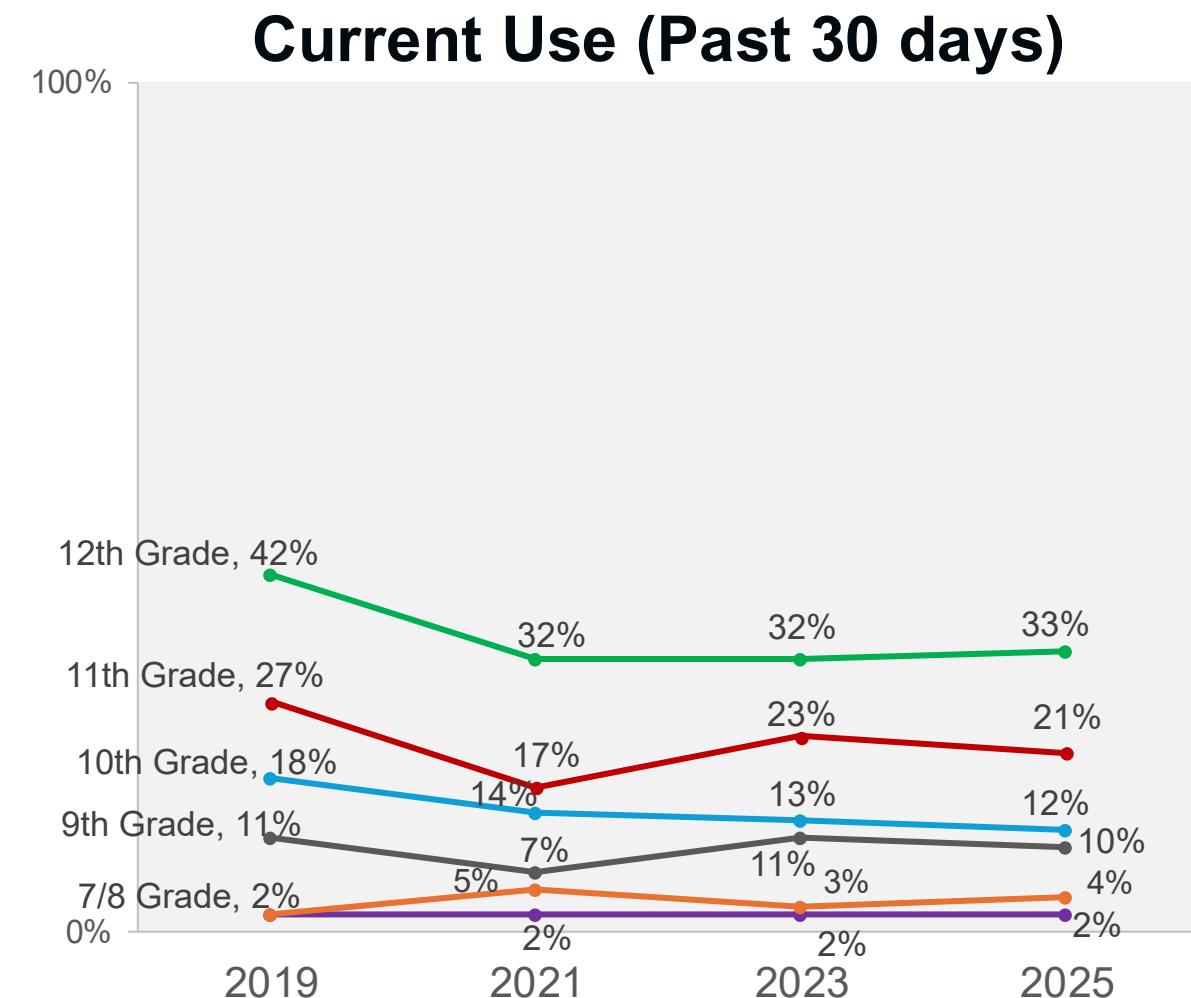
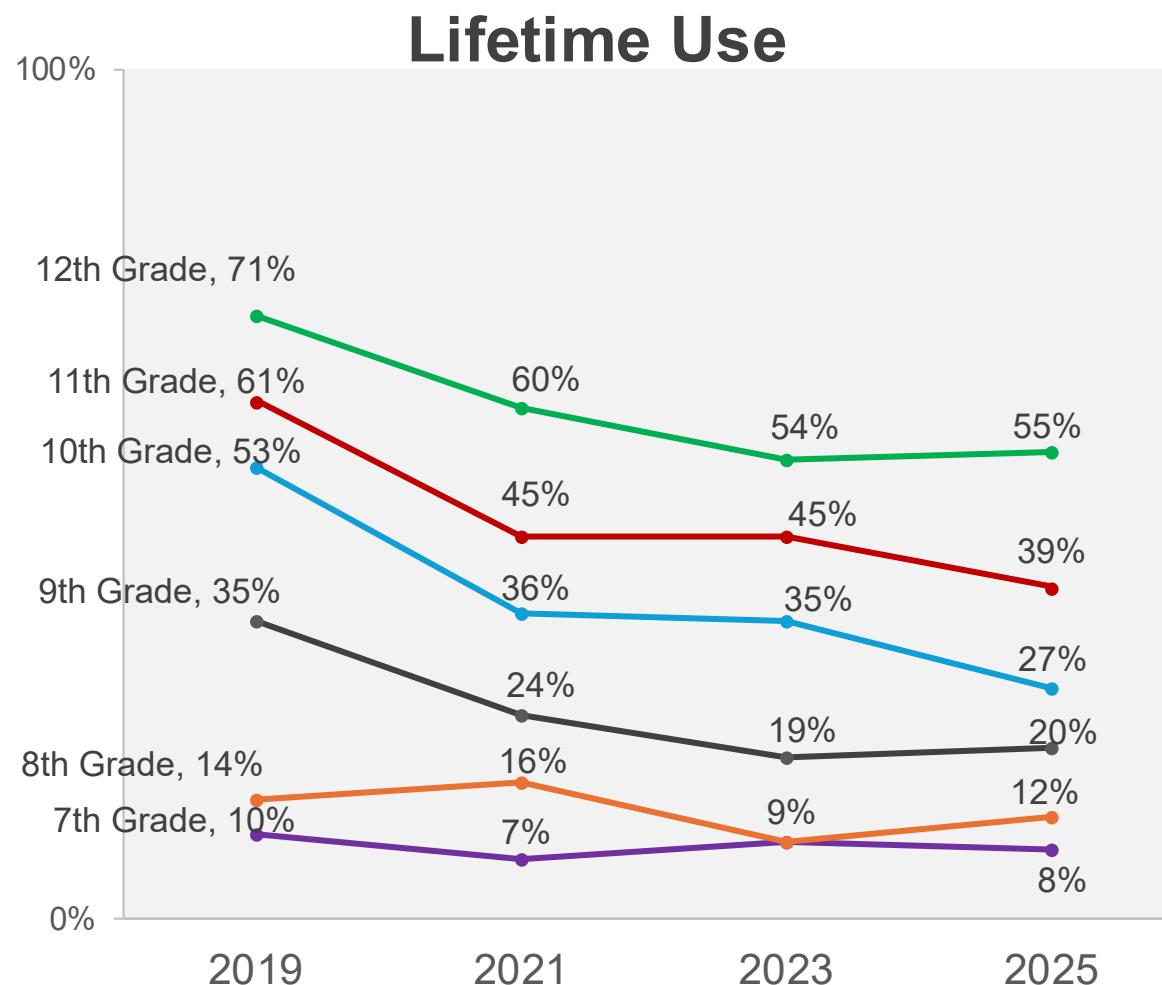
# Discussion Topics to Consider

1. What resonates with you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What questions do you have?

# SUBSTANCE USE

ALCOHOL  
MARIJUANA  
VAPING

# Lifetime and Current Alcohol Use, all grades



# Alcohol Use: Middle School

**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

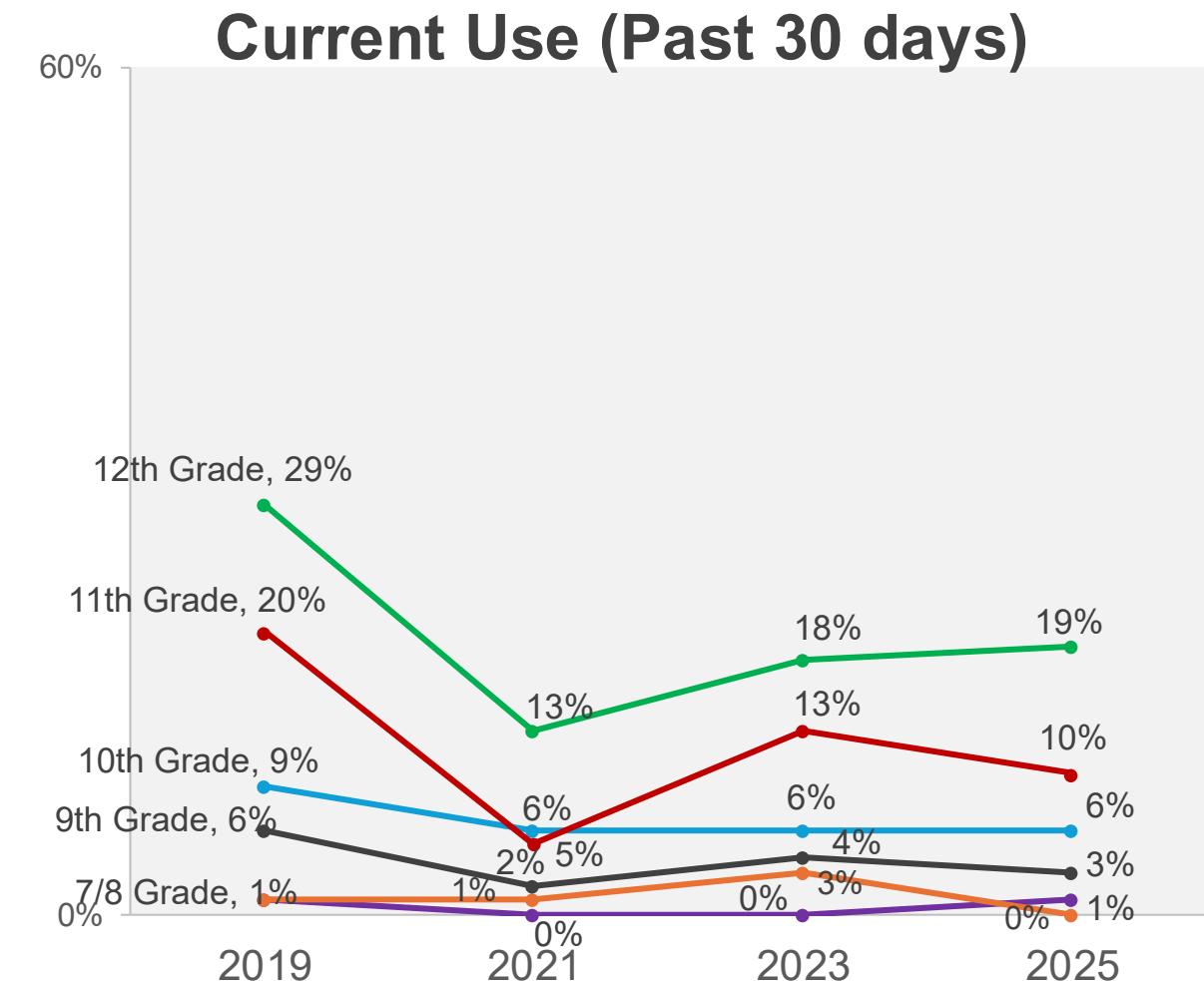
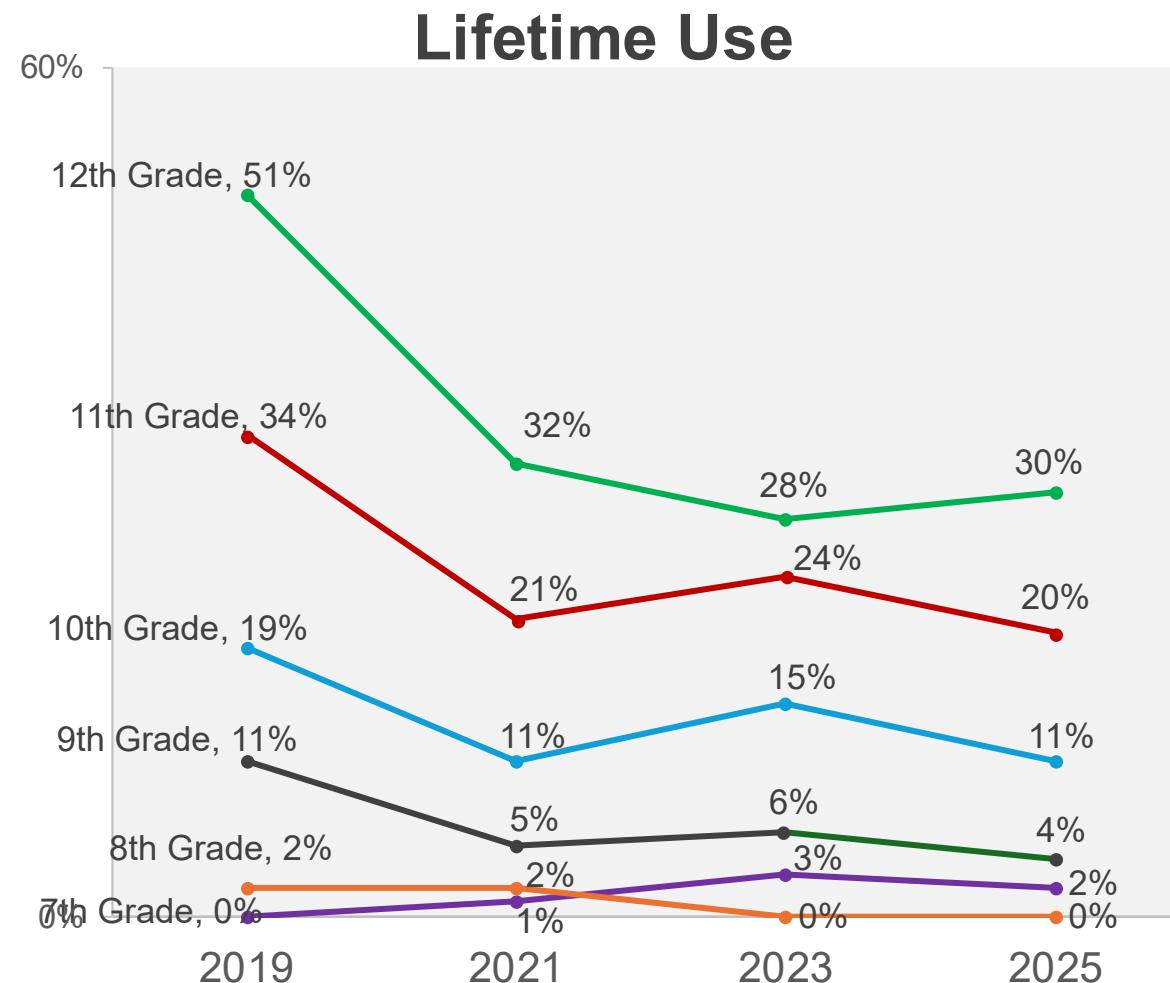
**In 2025, 18% of high schoolers reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.**

**9% of high schoolers reported binge drinking (i.e., “having 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, within about 2 hours”) in the past 30 days**

**In high school, drinking is more common among:**

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

# Lifetime and Current Marijuana Use, all grades



# 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% – with 9% reporting marijuana use in 2025.

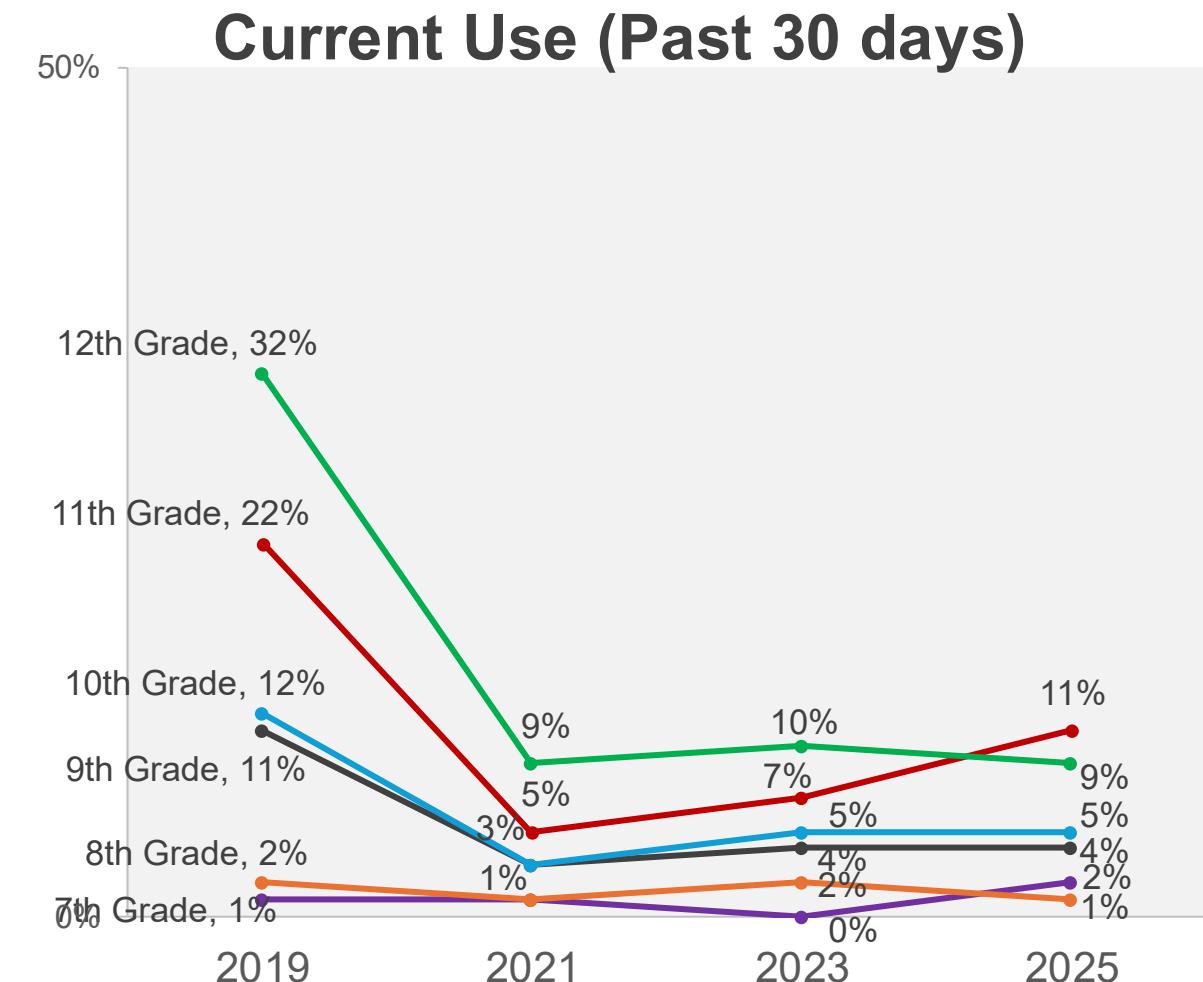
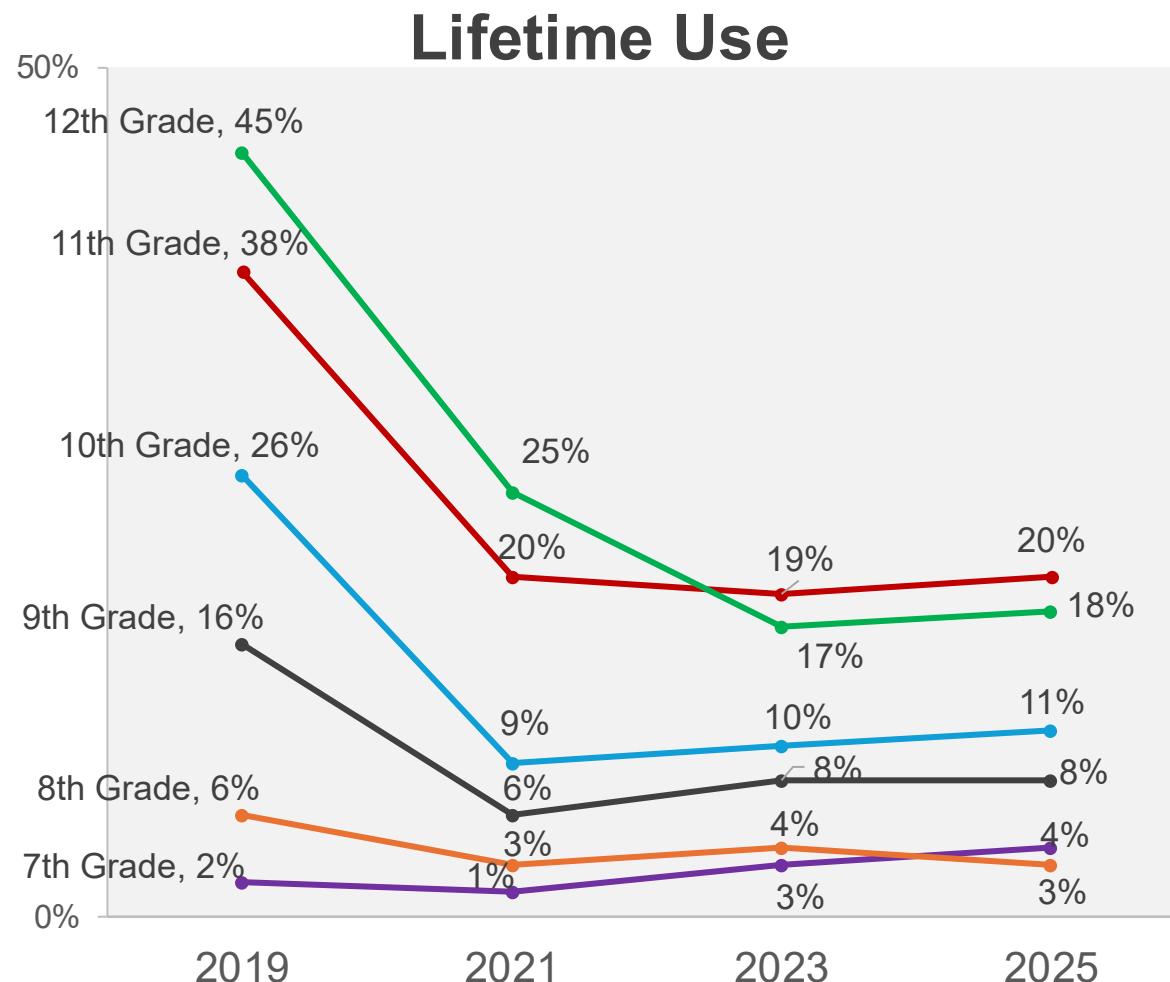


**In high school, higher rates of marijuana use are reported among:**

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

**... And increase by grade**

# Lifetime and Current Electronic Vapor Use, all grades



# 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 schoolers 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 their peers have used  
substances (in their lifetime)  
at *higher* rates than their  
peers actually report using.**

**High Schoolers believe that  
their peers are currently  
using substances at *higher*  
rates than their peers  
actually report using.**

# Pause for Discussion

1. What resonates with you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What questions do you have?

# MENTAL HEALTH and WELLNESS

STRESS,  
DEPRESSION and ANXIETY  
SELF-HARM and SUICIDE

# Overwhelming Stress

**16% of middle schoolers  
and**

**24% of high schoolers**

**experienced frequent,  
overwhelming stress this  
past year.**

**Groups who report higher  
stress rates:**

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

# Top Stressors

Among *both* middle and high school students, 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. These are both  
*decreases.***



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

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

# Anxiety

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

**In 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**
- **LGBTQ+ students**



# Self-Harm

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

**Consistent** with reported rates from 2023.

Highest rates of self-harm are reported among:

- TDG students
- LGBTQ+ 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**
- **LGBTQ+ 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.**

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

- **TGD students**
- **LGBTQ+ students**
- **Black students**

# Pause for Discussion

1. What resonates with you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What questions do you have?

# PERSONAL SAFETY

BULLYING  
SEXUAL and DATING  
VIOLENCE

# Bullying: Middle School

**In 2025, 19% of middle schoolers reported being bullied on school property and ...**

**10% of middle schoolers reported being bullied electronically.**

***Consistent with reported rates from 2023.***

**Groups who experienced 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

**10% of high schoolers reported being bullied on school property and ...**

**11% of high schoolers reported being bullied electronically.**

***Consistent with reported rates from 2023.***

**Groups of students 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

**95% of middle schoolers reported *never* having 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

**90% of high schoolers reported *never* having 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**

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

TRUSTED ADULTS  
CLOSE FRIENDS  
COPING STRATEGIES

# Trusted Adults

**Among middle schoolers,**

- **68% have a school adult**
- **91% have a family adult**
- **67% have a non-family adult (out of school)**

**that they can talk with if they need to.**

**Among high schoolers,**

- **81% have a school adult**
- **94% have a family adult**
- **75% have a non-family adult (out of school)**

**that they can talk with if they need to.**

# Close Friends

**93% of middle and  
94% of high school students  
report having *at least one friend  
(of similar age)* that they can talk  
with if they need to.**

# Coping Strategies

**56% of middle school and**

**66% of high school students**

**report having a *healthy*  
*activity/behavior that helps them*  
*relieve stress.***

# CLOSING

CROSS-ANALYSES  
DISCUSSION  
THANK YOU!

# 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.

# Pause for Discussion

1. What resonates with you?
2. What surprises you?
3. What questions do you have?

---

# THANK YOU!

---

Have further questions or want to get involved?

Email Lisa at [Lisa\\_Gibalerio@waysideyouth.org](mailto:Lisa_Gibalerio@waysideyouth.org)