



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

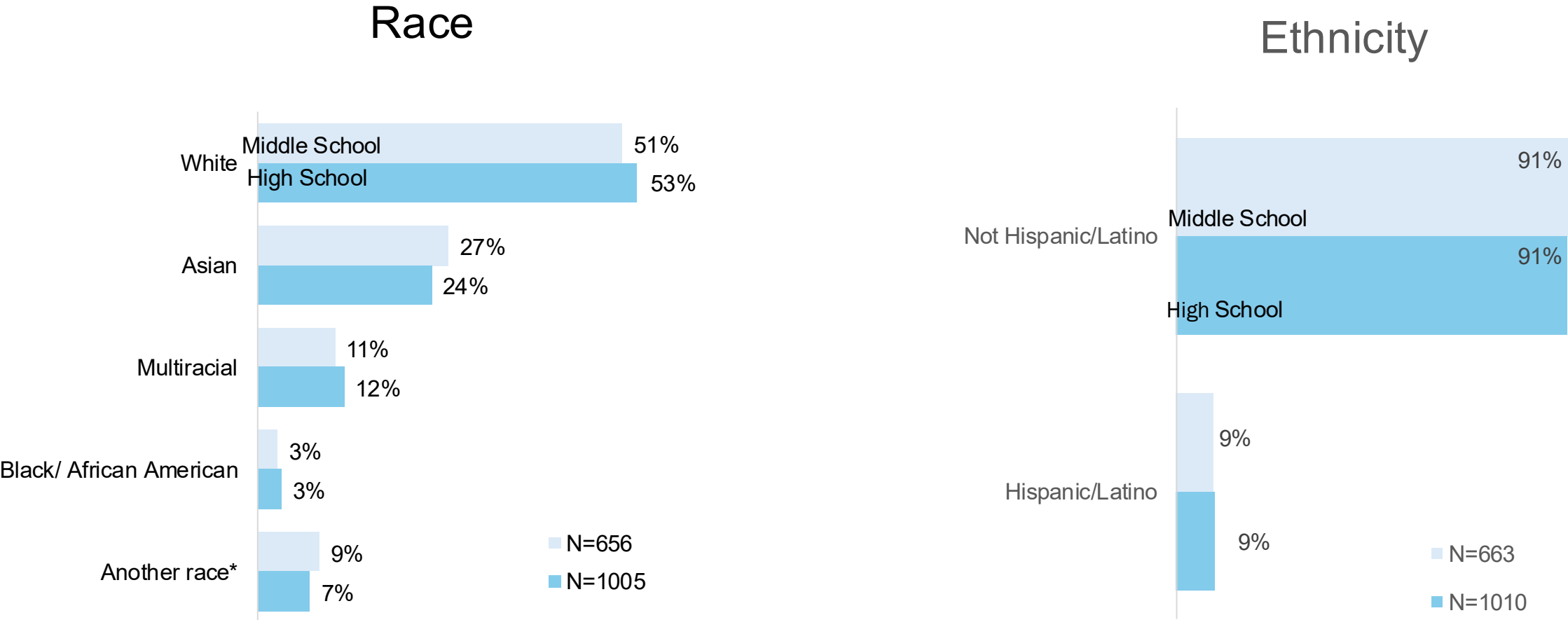
Grade	Responses	Percentage of grade *
7 th	338	90%
8 th	321	87%
Total	659	89%

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

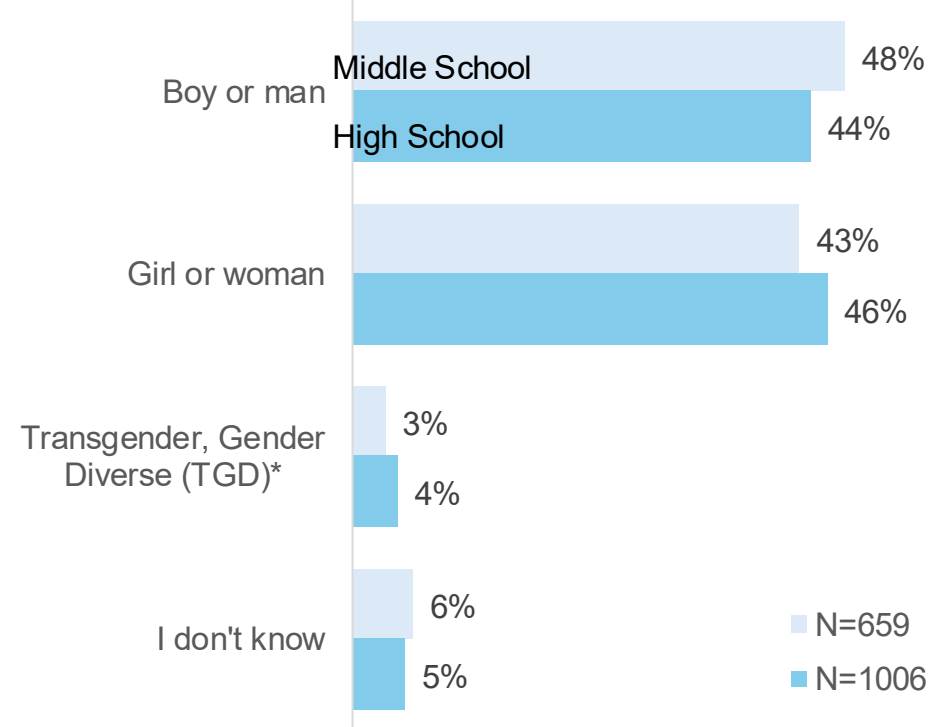
Respondent Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



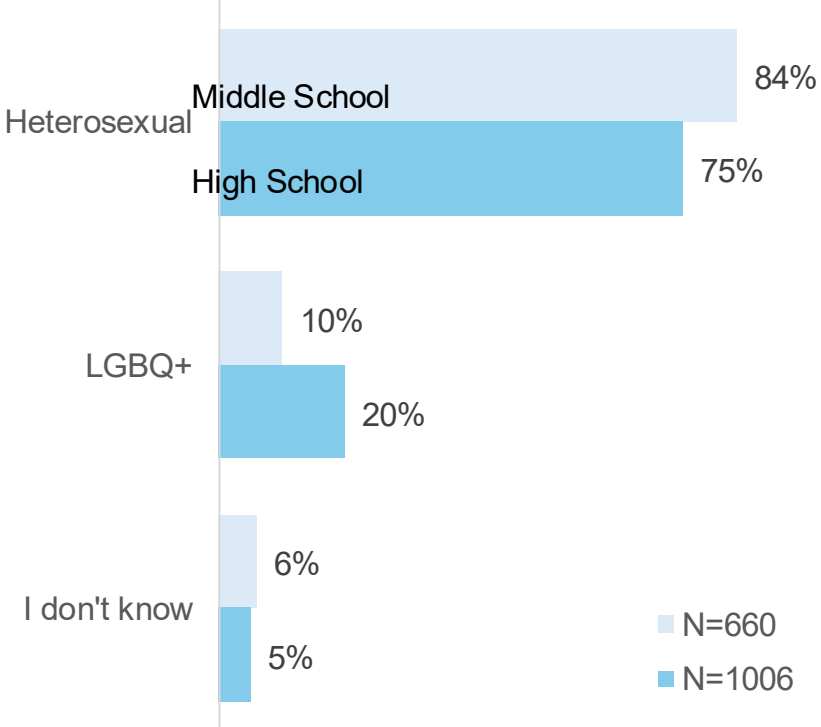
*Another race incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Another race. Hispanic/Latino are included in race to be consistent with new census categories for race.

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

RIGHT BOX:

**Key populations and areas
for targeted focus**

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

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

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

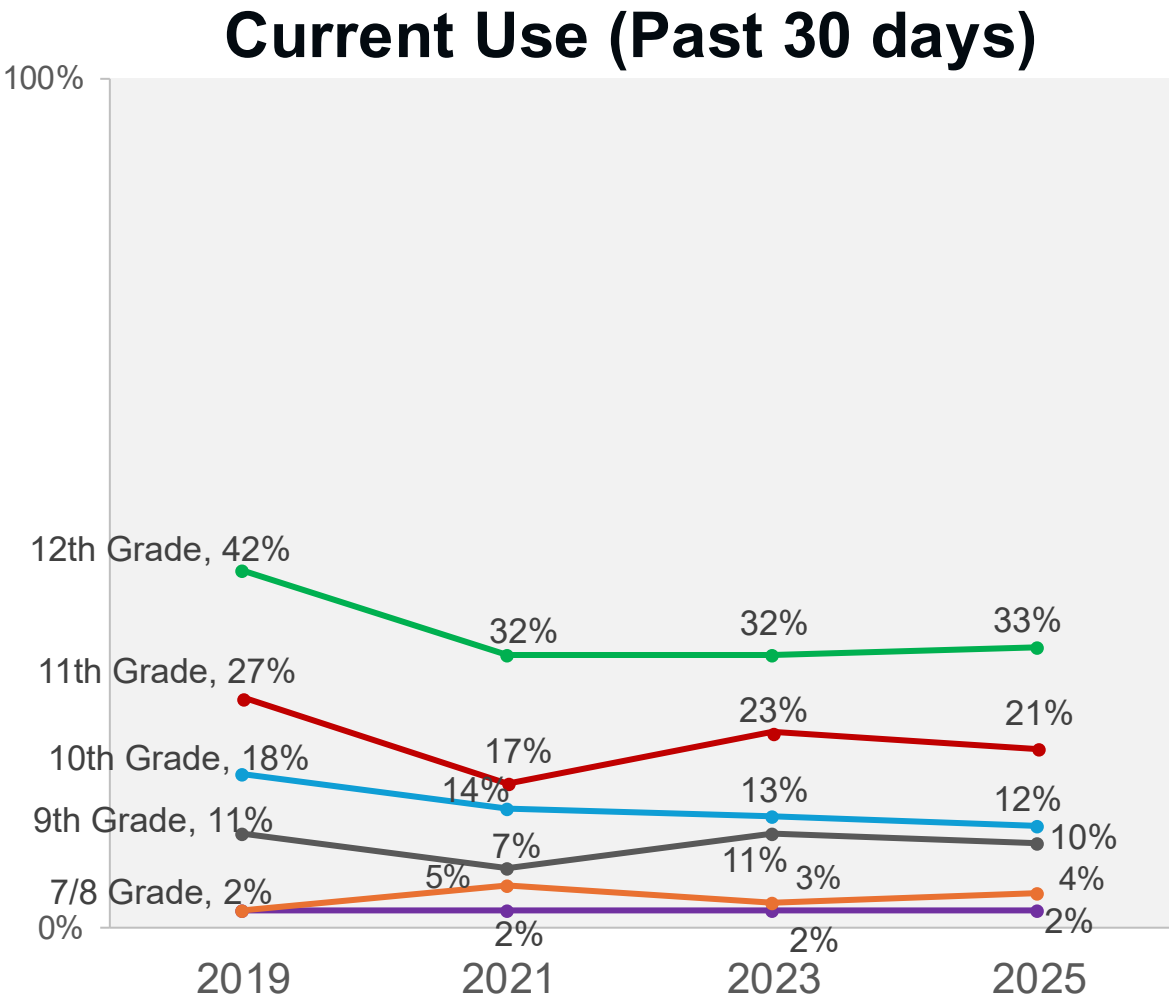
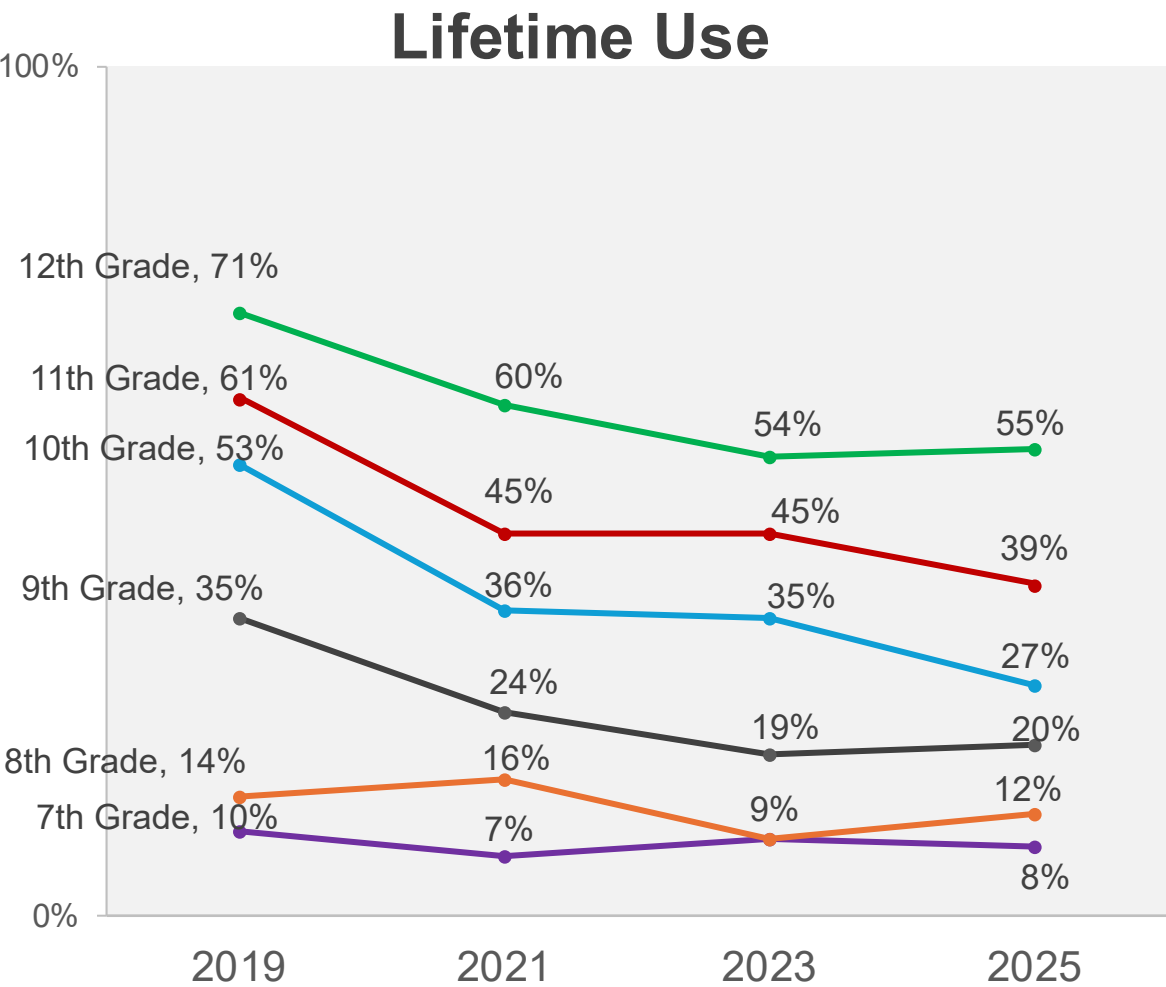
Discussion Topics to Consider

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

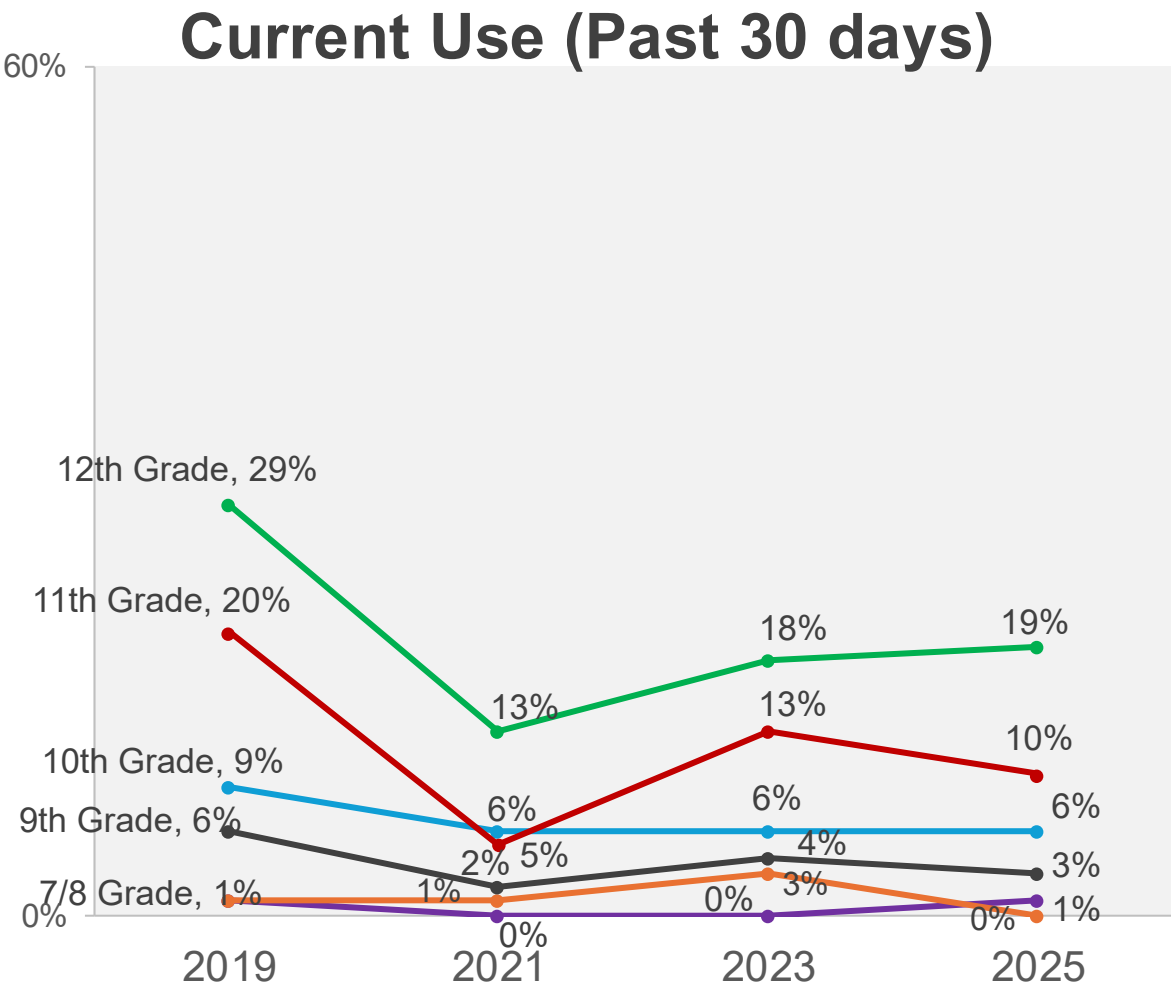
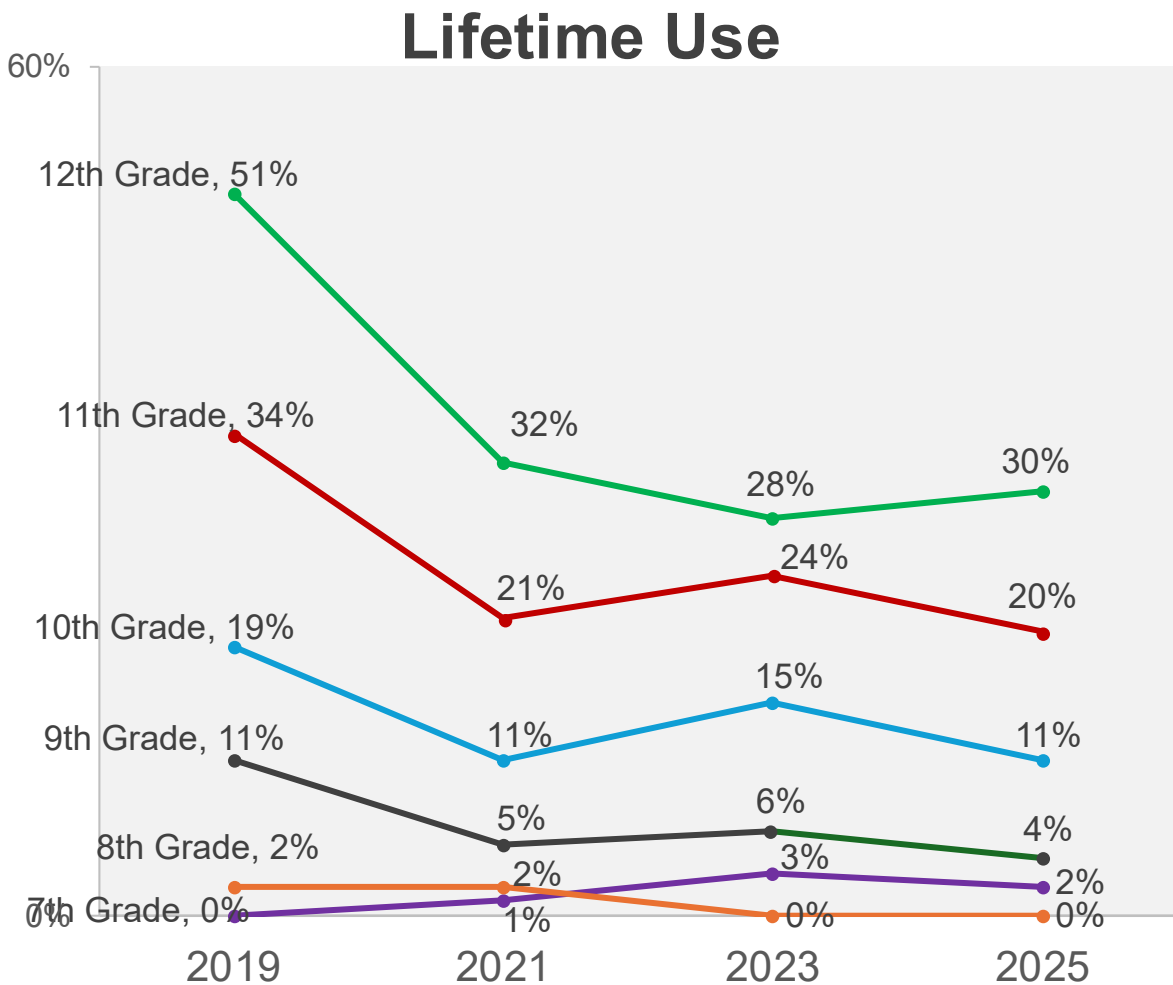
In 2025, 18% of high schoolers reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

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

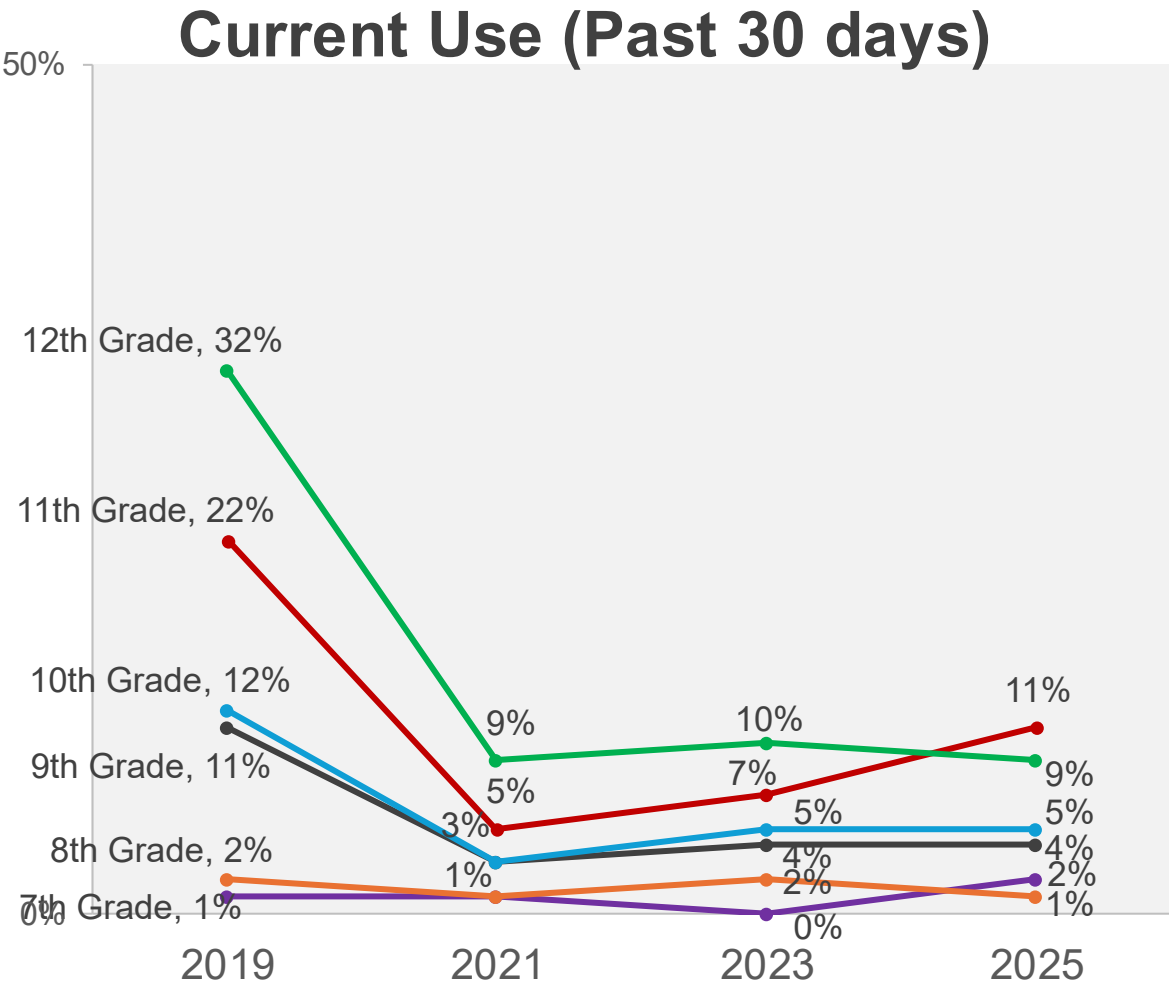
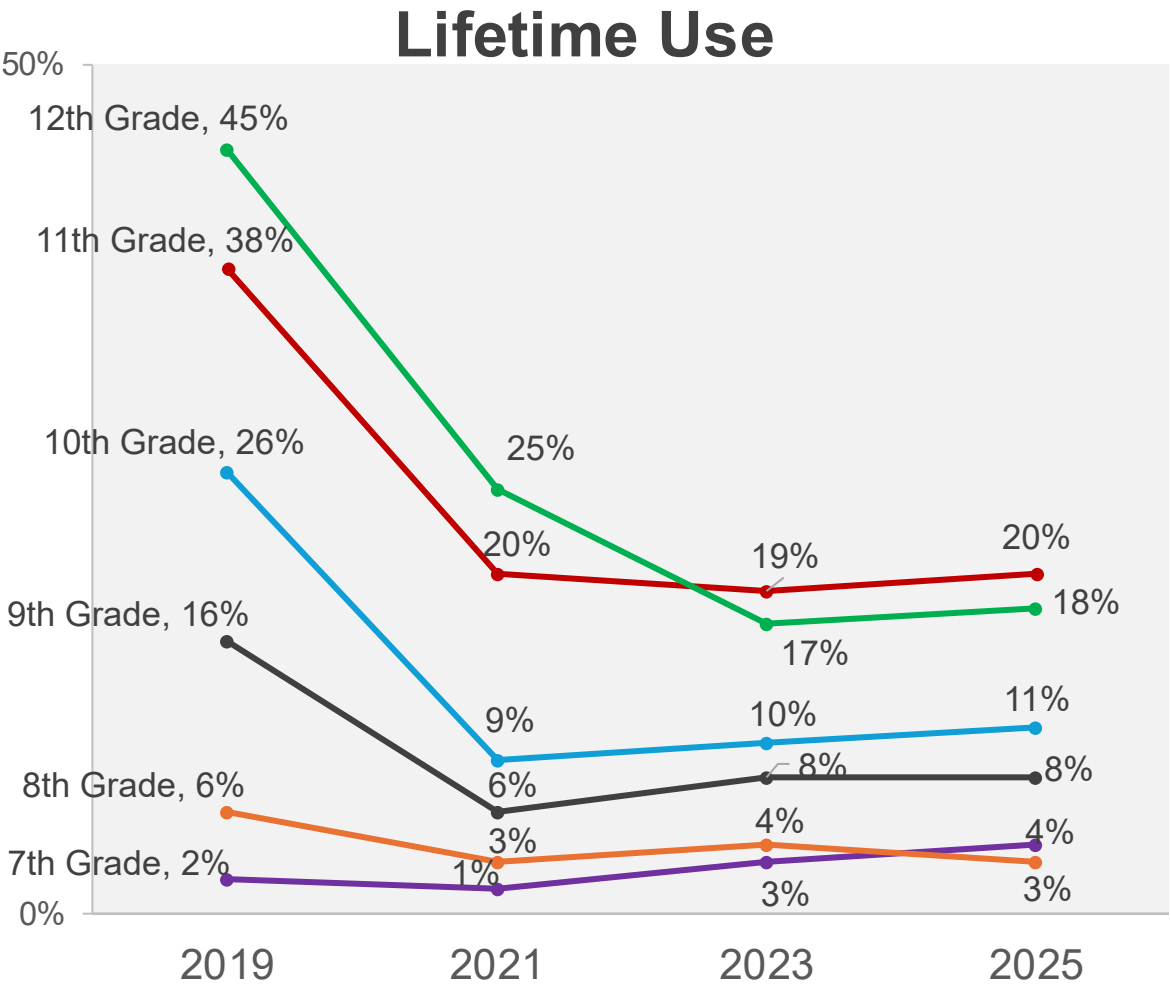
Since 2019, current marijuana use among high schoolers has *decreased* by 44% – with 9% reporting marijuana use in 2025.

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

- TGD students
 - Black students
 - Multiracial students
 - LGBTQ+ 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)**
- **11th 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**
- **LGBQ+ 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**
- **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.**

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

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

Pause for Discussion

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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