

Questions asked to the Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC) Leadership Team during PTSO Presentation, 1/13/2026

Question: What is the percentage of students who use nicotine or nicotine products?

Response: Nicotine use is comparable to the other substances of interest. Among Belmont middle school students, 2% have ever used nicotine in their lifetime, while 0% currently use. Among Belmont high school students, 9% have ever used nicotine in their lifetime, while 4% currently use.

Question: What is the number of suicide attempts in the past year?

Response: When we look at rates of attempted suicide in the past year, we see that 2% of middle school students (14 students) and 2% of high school students (16 students) have attempted suicide.

Question: Has marijuana access changed over time? Can this be compared to others in the Middlesex League?

Response: It appears that the Middlesex League has comparison information on ease of access, but not means of access.

Questions asked to the Belmont Wellness Coalition (BWC) via email by parent who did not attend the presentation

Question: The number of kids who say they are experiencing emotional abuse in their dating relationships seems high to me. I am curious how students are defining "emotional abuse" experienced in dating relationships. Is a definition provided for them in the survey?

Response: Below are the survey questions that specifically ask about emotional abuse by a partner. Please note that the middle school survey asked about *lifetime* experience, while high school students were asked about their experience during the *past year*. The middle school question also was adapted to a lower reading level with simpler language. The responses received from Belmont students are aligned with [national statistics](#).

MIDDLE SCHOOL text of survey question about 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.

HIGH SCHOOL text of survey question about emotional abuse by a partner in the past

year: 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.

Question: The substance use numbers seem low, particularly those for vaping. I find it somewhat hard to believe that more kids have tried cannabis than vaped at some point in their lives.

Response: Rates of vaping and marijuana use also seemed low to BWC, so additional analysis was done to determine the frequency of substance use. A “yes” response” to current use was any non-zero response, of any frequency. Numbers below indicate the variation between yes responses, which could account for the lower overall “yes” response and the higher perception of use.

- 9% of high school students (87 students) reported using marijuana products in the past 30 days. Of those 87 students:
 - 51% used 1 or 2 times
 - 22% used 3 to 9 times
 - 6% used 10 to 19 times
 - 7% used 20 to 39 times
 - 15% used 40 or more times
- 7% of high school students (70 students) reported vaping in the past 30 days. Of those 70 students:
 - 31% vaped 1 to 2 days
 - 14% vaped 3 to 5 days
 - 9% vaped 6 to 9 days
 - 9% vaped 10 to 19 days
 - 13% vaped 20 to 29 days
 - 24% vaped all 30 days
- 18% of high school students (175 students) reported drinking in the past 30 days. Of those 175 students:
 - 50% drank 1 to 2 days
 - 24% drank 3 to 5 days
 - 15% drank 6 to 9 days
 - 3% drank 10 to 19 days
 - 2% drank 20 to 29 days
 - 6% drank all 30 days

Question: Is there a way to encourage more 11th and 12th graders to take the survey? Completion rates are rather low for those grades, which may be one of the reasons the substance use numbers are lower than they might be.

Response: John Snow Inc. and the Belmont Public Schools administer the survey, so they can also provide some responses to this question. Please also see the question above addressing

lower substance use rates. The participation rate is lower for 11th and 12th grades. However, the data we shared is a sample of students, which is always a representation of a data set. We shared percentages, not overall numbers of students (n counts). We cannot know which students are participating or not or infer that the students who complete the surveys are using substances at lower numbers. BWC also looks at state trends and is aware of national trends, and finds that Belmont is aligned with both and is also mostly comparable among the Middlesex League.