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**REPORT ON**  
**THE 2012 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**  
**FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 9, 10, 11 AND 12**  
**FOR THE**  
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

PREPARED BY:

JAMES E. BYRNE, JR. MPA  
NORTHEAST HEALTH RESOURCES  
P.O. BOX 1421  
HAVERHILL, MA 01831

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Waltham Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to carry out the tabulations and an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for students in grades 9 through 12. This survey was developed specifically for high school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 99 questions, which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, illegal drug use, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, dietary behavior, and physical activity.

Every other year, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education carries out a Youth Risk Behavior Survey of high school students from a cross-section of school systems in the state. The most recent MA YRBS for which data is currently available was carried out by the Department of Education during the Spring of 2011. The survey was administered to students from 54 randomly selected public high schools in the state.

An overview of the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as well as a comparison with certain of the data from the 2011 Massachusetts YRBS for high school students, are included herein.

## **SURVEY PROCESS**

It was agreed that the survey would be administered to all students in attendance on the day of the survey from grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and nine students were withheld at parental request. The survey was administered to all students simultaneously on May 23, 2012. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to all students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 1,193 students who responded to the survey, 290 from grade 9, 315 from grade 10, 306 from grade 11, and 266 from grade 12. 589 females and 590 males responded to the survey. Fourteen students did not indicate their gender and sixteen students did not indicate their grade.

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

## OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from Waltham High School. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group, and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 99 questions, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results and to offer comparisons with the 2010 Waltham YRBS and data gathered from the implementation of the 2011 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey will assist the Waltham Public Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

The following includes comparisons with certain of the data from the 2011 MA YRBS. It should be noted that the report on the MA YRBS often only provides aggregate data on all students from grades 9 through 12 and not on the results from specific grades.

### VEHICLE RELATED SAFETY

- **12.4%** of all respondents (13.2% - 2010) (14% - MA YRBS) report **“never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else.** Respondents from grade 9 report doing so most frequently (grade 9 – 15.7%, grade 10 – 10.3%, grade 11 – 10.9%, grade 12 – 11.5%). Male respondents (15.9%) report never or rarely wearing a seatbelt more frequently than females (8.4%).
- **One-fourth (25.2%)** of all respondents (24.7% - 2010) (23% - MA YRBS) report **having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 22.4%, grade 10 – 16.0%, grade 11 – 28.4%, grade 12 – 33.3%). There was little variation by gender.
- **10.2%** of all respondents (12.3% - 2010) (7% - MA YRBS) report **having driven a car or other vehicle after they had been drinking alcohol** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 11 (14.1%) and grade 12 (18.9%). The groups which most frequently report this behavior were 11<sup>th</sup> grade males (20.7%), 12<sup>th</sup> grade females (12.9%), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade males (25.8%).

## VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **4.0%** of all respondents (5.1% - 2010) (4% - MA YRBS) **report having carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 9 – 2.8%, grade 10 – 2.5%, grade 11 – 4.2%, grade 12 – 4.9%). Males (5.6%) were more likely to have carried a weapon on school property than were females (1.7%).
- **6.2%** of all respondents (6.0% - 2010) (5% - MA YRBS) **report having not gone to school because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 9 – 10.1%, grade 10 – 2.9%, grade 11 – 6.2%, grade 12 – 5.3%). There was no variation by gender.
- **More than one-fourth (27.3%)** of all respondents (22.0% - 2010) **report having been bullied at school** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience decreased each year by grade (grade 9 – 38.6%, grade 10 – 26.1%, grade 11 – 24.9%, grade 12 – 18.1%) and was higher among female respondents (females – 29.5%, males – 24.4%).
- **One-fourth (25.1%)** of all respondents (21.3% - 2010) **report having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication in any form** during the previous twelve months. This experience of cyber-bullying was highest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 29.3%, grade 10 – 22.4%, grade 11 – 24.0%, grade 12 – 24.4%) and much higher among female respondents (females – 29.9%, males – 20.1%).
- **4.6%** of all respondents (4.5% - 2010) (7% - MA YRBS) **report having been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property** at least once during the previous 12 months. There was little variation by grade. The incidence of this experience was higher among male respondents (females – 2.2%, males – 6.8%).
- **7.4%** of all respondents (9.8% - 2010) (9% - MA YRBS) **reports having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with**. There was little variation by grade. The incidence of this experience was higher among females (females – 10.0%, males – 4.4%).
- **One respondent in five (20.1%)** (18.3% - 2010) (18% - MA YRBS) **reports having hurt or injured themselves on purpose (for example by cutting, burning, or bruising)** at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior decreased each year by grade (grade 9 – 24.2%, grade 10 – 21.9%, grade 11 – 19.4%, grade 12 – 13.4%). Female respondents (26.8%) report such self-injury twice as frequently as males (13.1%).

SUICIDE

- **13.0%** of all respondents (13.9% - 2010) (13% - MA YRBS) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 9 – 17.8%, grade 10 – 11.1%, grade 11 – 12.4%, grade 12 – 8.8%). Females (16.6%) report doing so more frequently than males (9.2%).
- **15.1%** of all respondents (15.4% - 2010) (7% - MA YRBS) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. Further, among all respondents, **4.4%** (5.1% - 2010) **report that if they attempted suicide, that attempt resulted in receiving medical treatment from a doctor or nurse.**

**“During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?”**

**“At least once”**

	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>MA YRBS</u>
<b>Female</b>	16.8%	16.0%	13.5%	12.2%	14.9%	8%
<b>Male</b>	16.7%	13.9%	14.2%	15.3%	15.0%	5%
<b>Total</b>	16.7%	14.9%	14.1%	14.0%	15.1%	7%
<b>2010</b>	16.0%	16.0%	17.1%	11.7%	15.4%	

TOBACCO USE

- **40.2%** of all respondents (41.8% - 2010) (39% - MA YRBS) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 38.4%, grade 10 – 28.6%, grade 11 – 41.1%, grade 12 – 53.1%). There was no variation by gender. Further, **8.8%** of all respondents (9.6% - 2010) (7% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before the age of 13.**
- **19.7%** of all respondents (20.8% - 2010) (14% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigarettes** on at least one day during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of recent cigarette use was much lower in grade 10.

**“During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?”**

**“At least once”**

	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Female</b>	23.2%	9.3%	13.5%	24.5%	17.5%
<b>Male</b>	19.2%	10.3%	26.8%	30.1%	21.1%
<b>Total</b>	21.5%	9.8%	20.3%	27.3%	19.7%
<b>2010</b>	16.1%	19.3%	25.4%	22.1%	20.8%

- **10.2%** of all respondents (10.1% - 2010) (6% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigarettes on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (grade 9 – 7.9%, grade 10 – 3.5%, grade 11 – 10.5%, grade 12 – 18.6%). Male respondents (12.3%) report smoking cigarettes on school property more frequently than females (7.6%).
- **13.0%** of all respondents (17.9% - 2010) (14% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos or little cigars** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was much higher in grade 12 (grade 9 – 11.2%, grade 10 – 9.9%, grade 11 – 11.5%, grade 12 – 18.6%). Male respondents (18.6%) report the use of cigars or cigarillos much more frequently than females (7.2%).

ALCOHOL USE

- **Two-thirds (68.8%)** of all respondents (68.7% - 2010) (68% - MA YRBS) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during their lives.** The incidence of lifetime alcohol use was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 61.7%, grade 10 – 60.2%, grade 11 – 73.5%, grade 12 – 80.8%) and was higher among female respondents (females – 71.1%, males – 66.4%). Further, **17.4%** of all respondents (16.4% - 2010) **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13.**
- **43.9%** of all respondents (44.6% - 2010) (40% - MA YRBS) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** The incidence of recent alcohol use was highest in grade 12.

**“During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?”**

**“At least once”**

	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Female</b>	35.9%	36.7%	41.9%	47.8%	40.7%
<b>Male</b>	41.4%	30.7%	50.7%	67.8%	46.6%
<b>Total</b>	38.9%	33.5%	46.1%	57.5%	43.9%
<b>2010</b>	37.2%	35.4%	49.3%	56.6%	44.6%

- **More than one-fourth (26.3%)** of all respondents (27.8% - 2010) (22% - MA YRBS) **report having had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row** (within a couple of hours) on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of recent binge drinking was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 19.0%, grade 10 – 17.2%, grade 11 – 31.7%, grade 12 – 37.0%). Male respondents (30.3%) report this behavior more frequently than females (22.1%).
- **39.5%** of all respondents (38.0% - 2010) **report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens is allowed either occasionally or frequently** during the previous 12 months. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 31.1%, grade 10 – 33.9%, grade 11 – 45.6%, grade 12 – 47.9%). There was no variation by gender.



## ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **42.5%** of all respondents (42.8% - 2010) (43% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used marijuana** and **7.4%** (7% - MA YRBS) **report having done so for the first time before the age of 13**. The incidence of lifetime marijuana use was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 34.1%, grade 10 – 32.4%, grade 11 – 48.4%, grade 12 – 55.5%). Males (48.0%) were much more likely to have ever used marijuana than were females (36.8%). Further, **22.7%** of all respondents (28% - MA YRBS) **report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**.

**“During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?”**

**“At least once”**

	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Female</b>	17.5%	16.0%	15.6%	19.6%	17.2%
<b>Male</b>	20.0%	20.4%	35.6%	35.8%	27.8%
<b>Total</b>	18.7%	18.3%	25.3%	27.8%	22.7%
<b>2010</b>	23.3%	25.5%	30.1%	33.6%	28.1%

- **7.5%** all respondents (7.2% - 2010) (5% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase** (grade 9 – 5.5%, grade 10 – 3.8%, grade 11 – 6.9%, grade 12 – 12.9%) (females – 4.1%, males – 10.3%).
- **5.6%** of all respondents (6.2% - 2010) (6% - MA YRBS) **report having used ecstasy (also called MDMA) on at least one occasion during their lives** (grade 9 – 4.5%, grade 10 – 2.6%, grade 11 – 7.6%, grade 12 – 6.9%). Males (7.8%) report ever using ecstasy more frequently than females (3.3%).
- **17.0%** all respondents (18.1% - 2010) **report having used someone else’s prescription medication** during the previous 12 months. There was little variation by grade (grade 9 – 16.5%, grade 10 – 16.3%, grade 11 – 15.6%, grade 12 – 17.9%) or gender (females – 16.4%, males – 17.3%).
- **8.4%** all respondents (8.3% - 2010) **report having ever used any “other type” of illegal drug such as inhalants, LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB**. The lifetime incidence of “other illegal drug use” was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 8.0%, grade 10 – 5.1%, grade 11 – 8.9%, grade 12 – 11.4%). Male respondents (11.1%) report this behavior more frequently than females (5.4%).
- **One-fourth (25.0%)** of all respondents (22.9% - 2010) (27% - MA YRBS) **report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey**. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 25.5%, grade 10 – 22.7%, grade 11 – 24.3%, grade 12 – 27.2%). Male respondents (28.4%) were more likely to have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property than were females (21.6%).

## HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **One-half (52.0%)** of all respondents (50.1% - 2010) (55% - MA YRBS) **report having had no conversations at all with their parents or other adults in their family about sex or ways to prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy during the twelve months prior to the survey.** There was little variation by grade (grade 9 – 50.7%, grade 10 – 50.3%, grade 11 – 51.3%, grade 12 – 54.8%). Males (56.7%) report having not had such a conversation more frequently than females (47.2%).
- **85.0%** of all respondents (71.5% - 2010) (84% - MA YRBS) **report having ever been taught about AIDS/HIV infection in school.** The incidence of this education was highest in the upper grades (grade 9 – 82.0%, grade 10 – 79.2%, grade 11 – 89.1%, grade 12 – 91.2%) and was slightly higher among females (females – 87.2%, males – 82.8%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **Nearly half (46.3%)** of all respondents (49.4% - 2010) (42% - MA YRBS) **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade. Further, **7.3%** of all respondents (4% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 13**.

“Have you ever had sexual intercourse?”

“Yes”

	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Female</b>	30.1%	34.5%	47.7%	60.3%	43.0%
<b>Male</b>	40.6%	36.3%	54.8%	69.4%	49.5%
<b>Total</b>	35.3%	35.4%	51.0%	64.8%	46.3%
<b>2010</b>	33.3%	40.3%	58.2%	67.5%	49.4%

- **12.8%** of all respondents (15.2% - 2010) (11% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse with four or more partners** during their lives. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 6.9%, grade 10 – 8.7%, grade 11 – 13.6%, grade 12 – 22.4%). Male respondents (15.0%) report this experience more frequently than females (10.5%).
- **31.2%** of all respondents (34.1% - 2010) (30% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse at least once during the three months prior to the survey**. The incidence of recent sexual intercourse increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 21.4%, grade 10 – 23.8%, grade 11 – 34.5%, grade 12 – 46.0%). There was no variation by gender.

## DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While **55.5%** of all respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight**, **46.1%** (45% - MA YRBS) were **trying to lose weight** and **16.7%** were **trying to gain weight**. The incidence of those trying to lose weight decreased each year by grade (grade 9 – 51.9%, grade 10 – 46.9%, grade 11 – 44.4%, grade 12 – 41.7%). Female respondents (58.8%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (33.5%).
  
- During the thirty days prior to the survey, in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:
  - **67.6%** of all respondents (67.4% - 2010) **report having exercised**. (females – 65.7%, males – 69.6%)
  
  - **39.8%** of all respondents (37.8% - 2010) **report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat** (females – 51.1%, males – 28.4%).
  
  - **12.1%** of all respondents (9.2% - 2010) (10% - MA YRBS) **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more** (females – 15.1%, males – 8.5%).
  
  - **5.9%** of all respondents (6.8% - 2010) (4% - MA YRBS) **report having taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice**. (females – 6.7%, males – 4.9%)
  
  - **5.2%** of all respondents (4.6% - 2010) (5% - MA YRBS) **report having vomited or taken laxatives**. (females – 6.7%, males – 3.5%)
  
- **One-third (35.4%)** of all respondents (37.1% - 2010) **report eating breakfast on all seven days during the week prior to the survey** (grade 9 – 34.4%, grade 10 – 40.8%, grade 11 – 32.7%, grade 12 – 34.3%). There was no variation by gender. Further, **14.2%** (15.2% - 2010) **report not eating breakfast at all during the previous week**.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **60.8%** of all respondents (62.9% - 2010) (63% - MA YRBS) **report having exercised or participated in physical activities for at least 20 minutes** on at least three days during the week prior to the survey. The incidence of such regular exercise was lowest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 61.6%, grade 10 – 67.6%, grade 11 – 60.2%, grade 12 – 54.3%). Males (67.6%) report regular exercise more frequently than females (54.6%).
- **29.5%** of all respondents (30.1% - 2010) (28% - MA YRBS) **report that they watch television 3 hours or more per day** on an average school day. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 33.1%, grade 10 – 28.7%, grade 11 – 28.9%, grade 12 – 26.5%). Males (31.9%) report watching television 3 hours or more per day on an average school day slightly more frequently than females (28.4%).

**APPENDIX**

**THE 2012 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

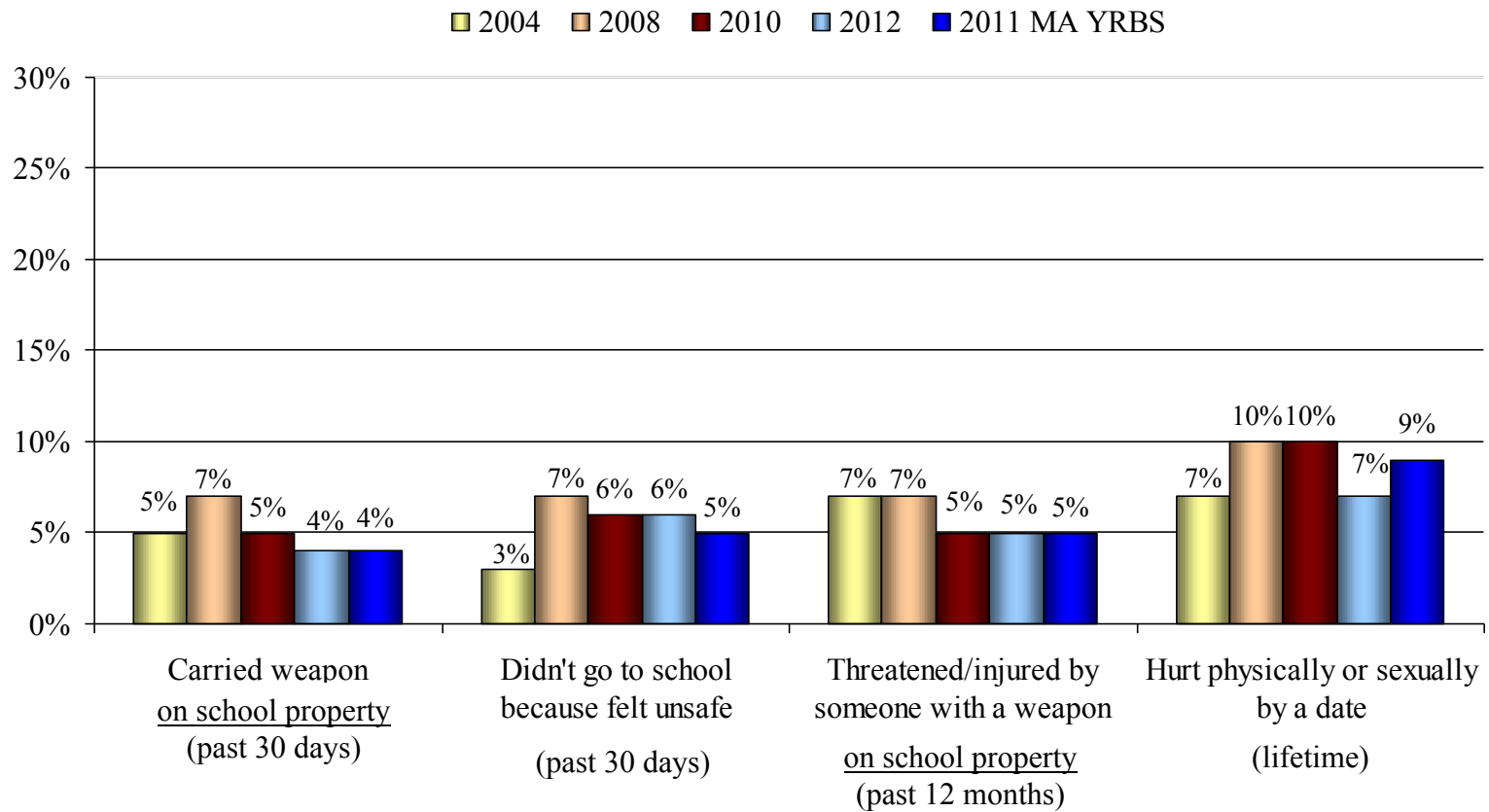
**FOR THE**

**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**GRADES 9, 10, 11, AND 12**

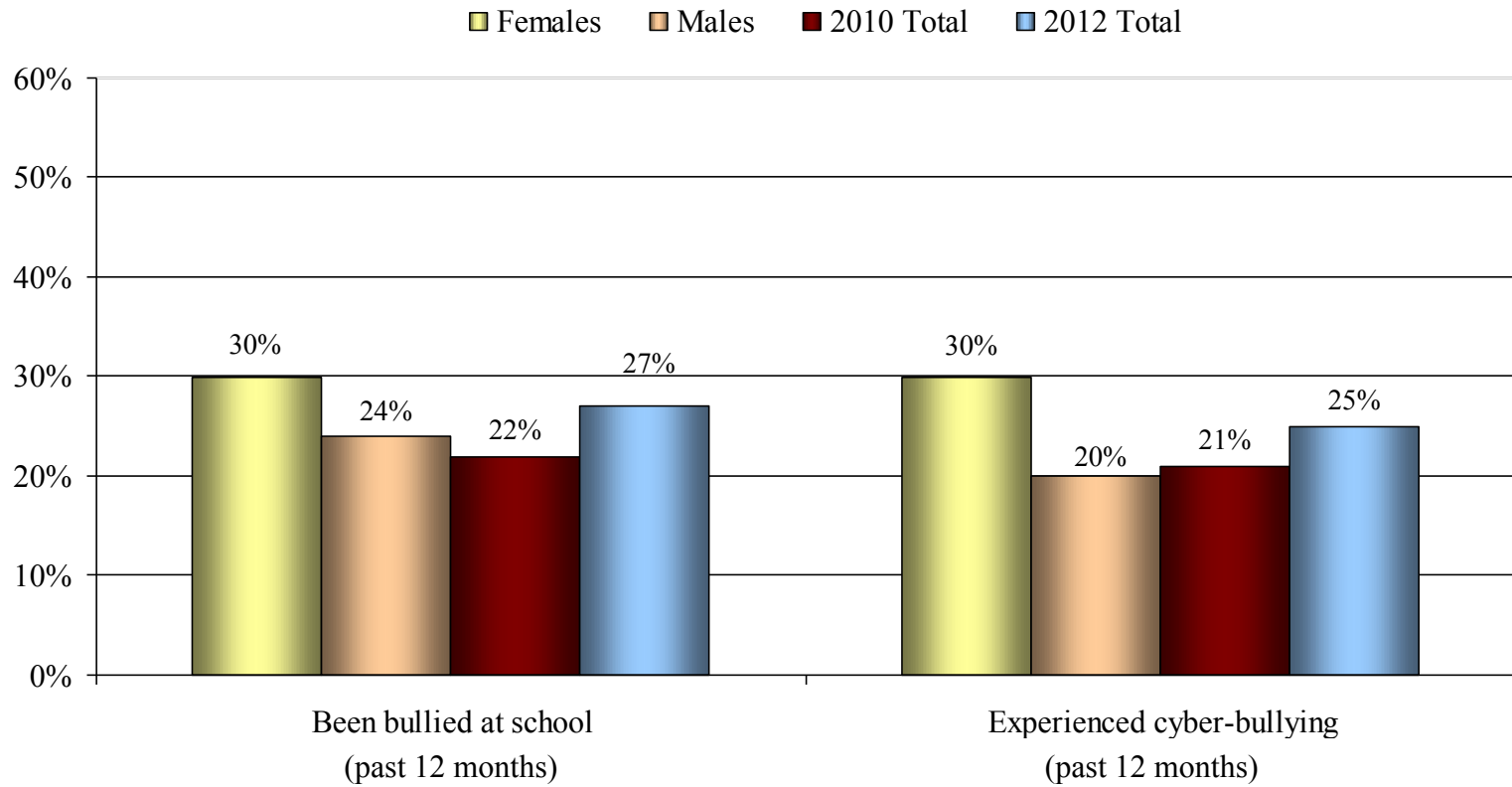
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS**



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

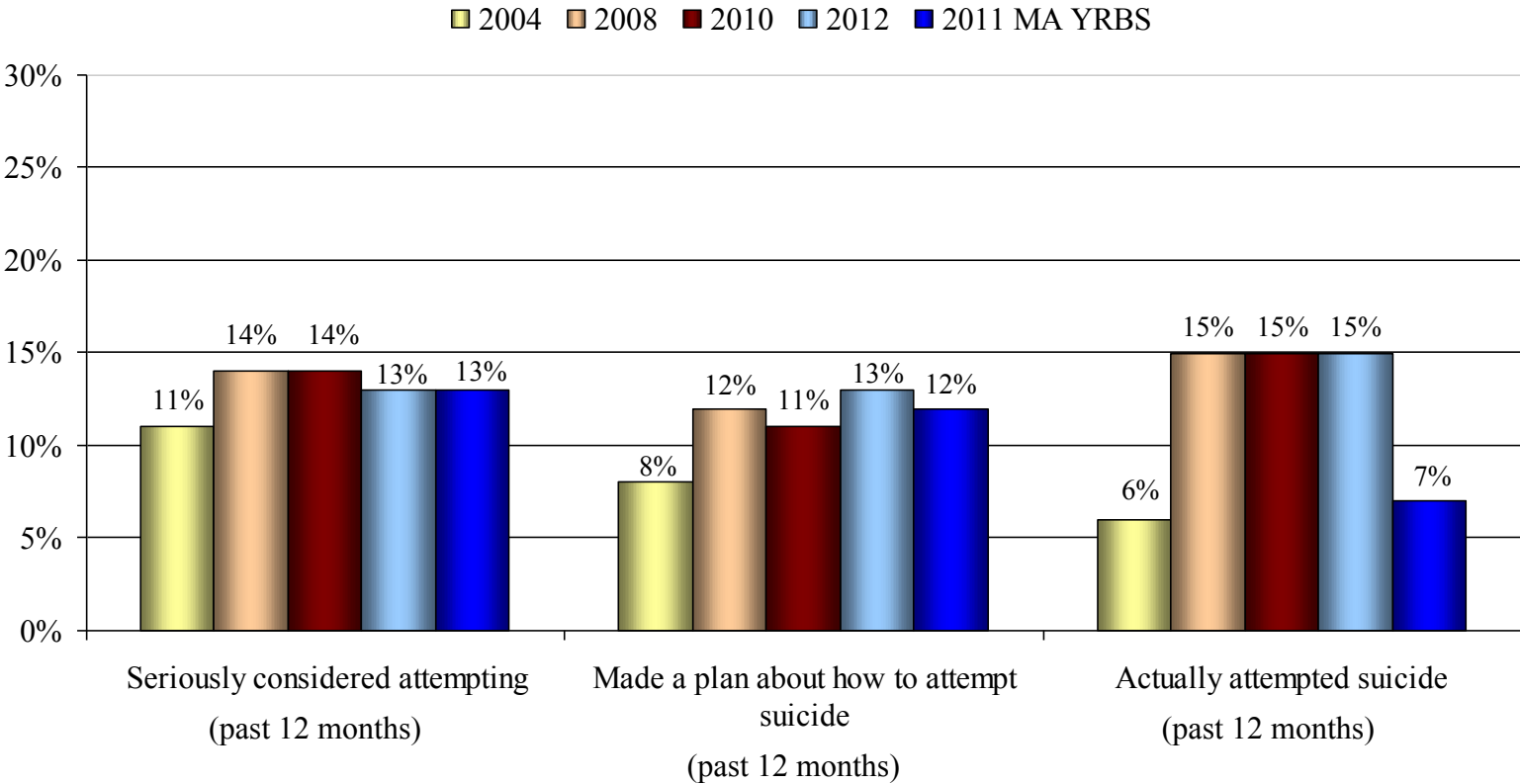
**VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS  
Bullying**





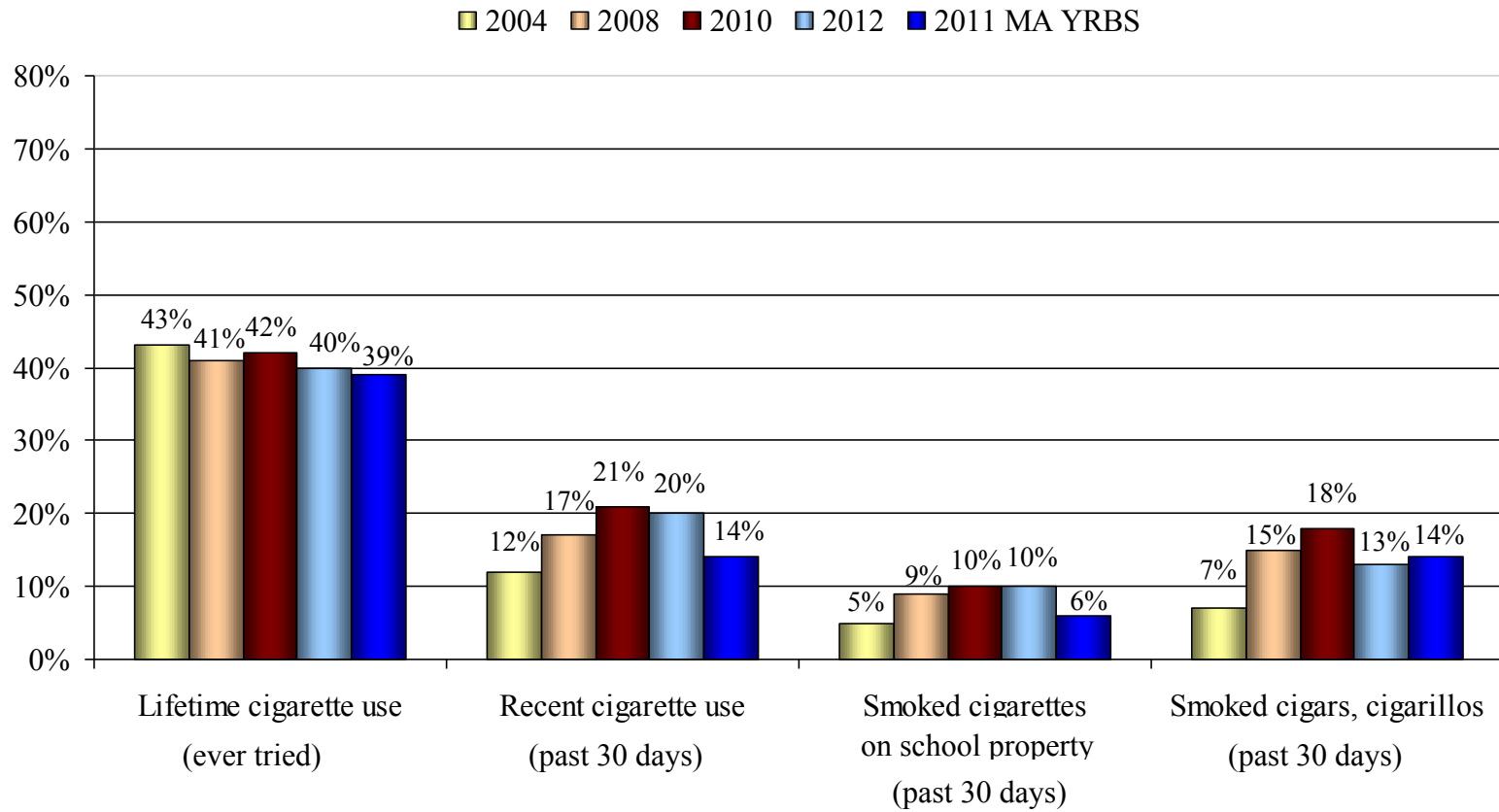
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**SUICIDE**



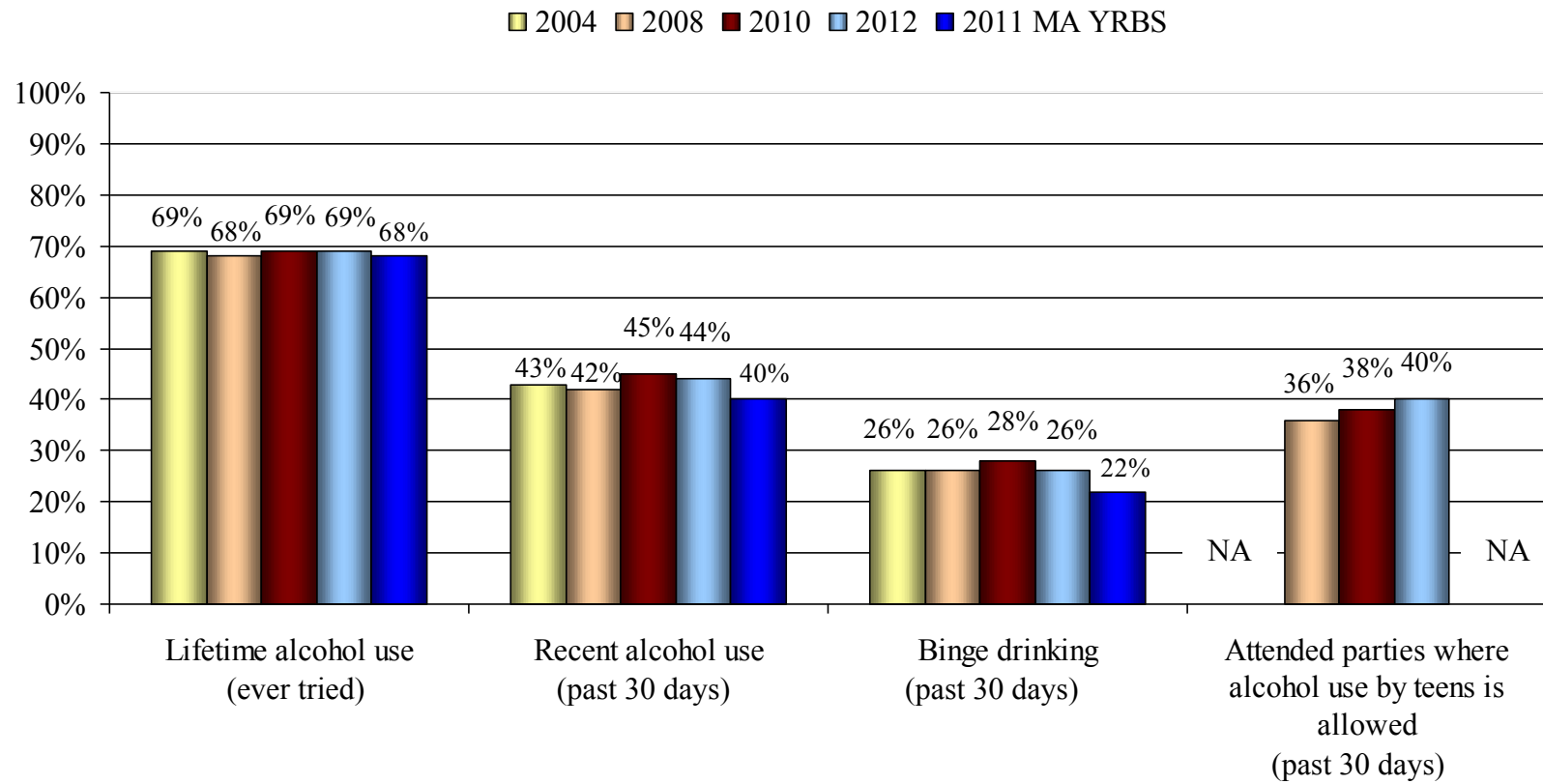
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2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**TOBACCO USE**



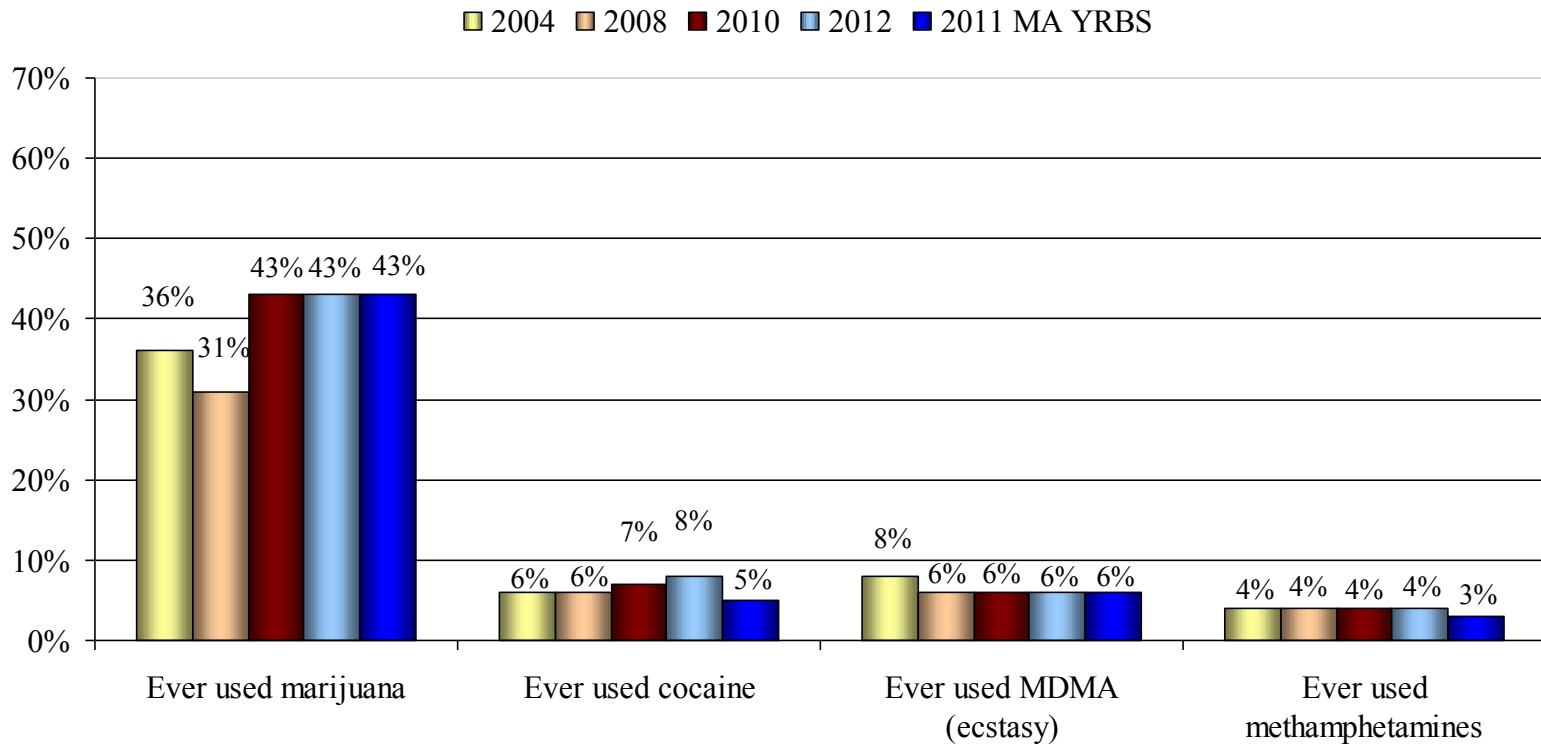
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**ALCOHOL USE**



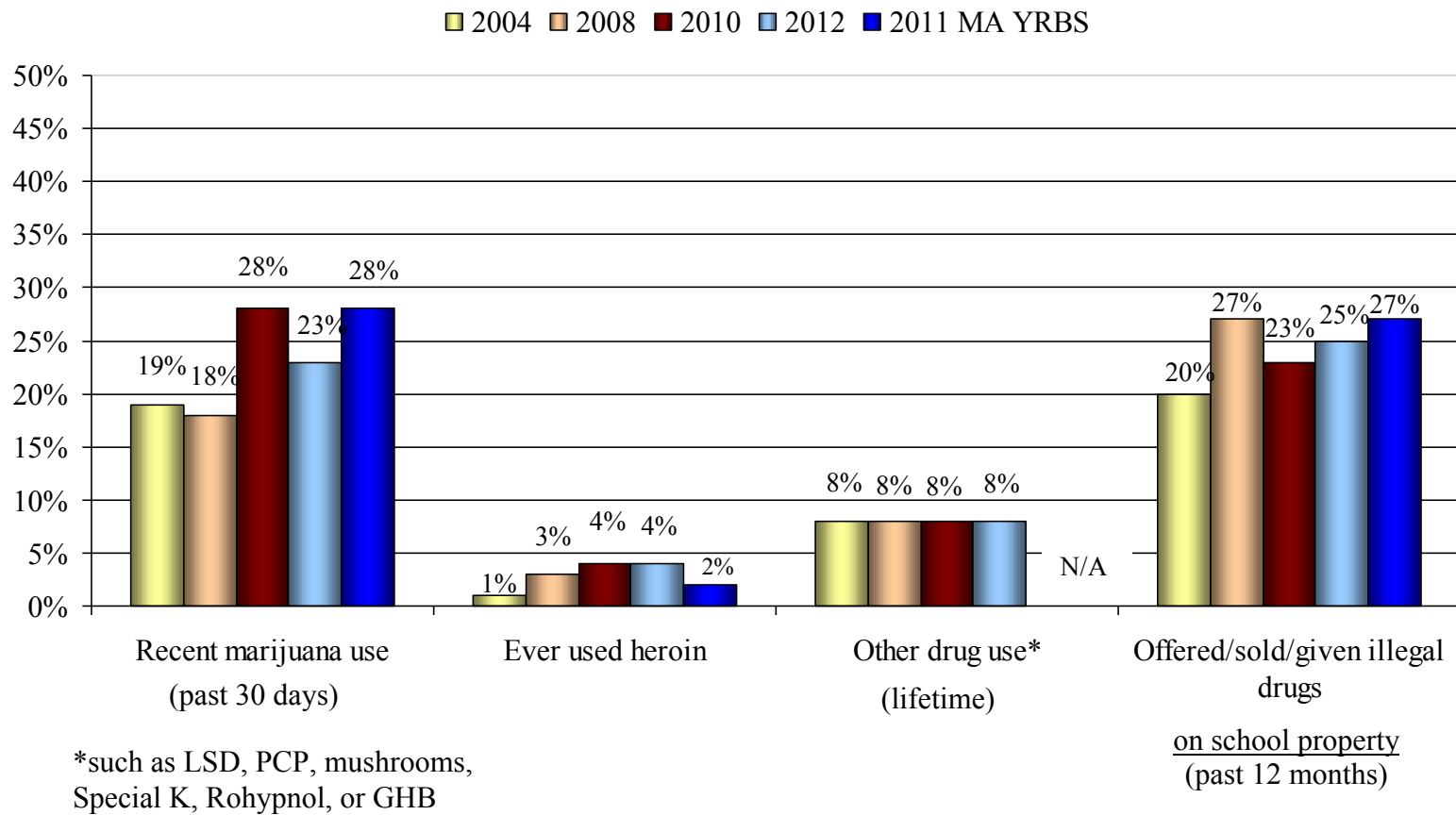
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**ILLEGAL DRUG USE**



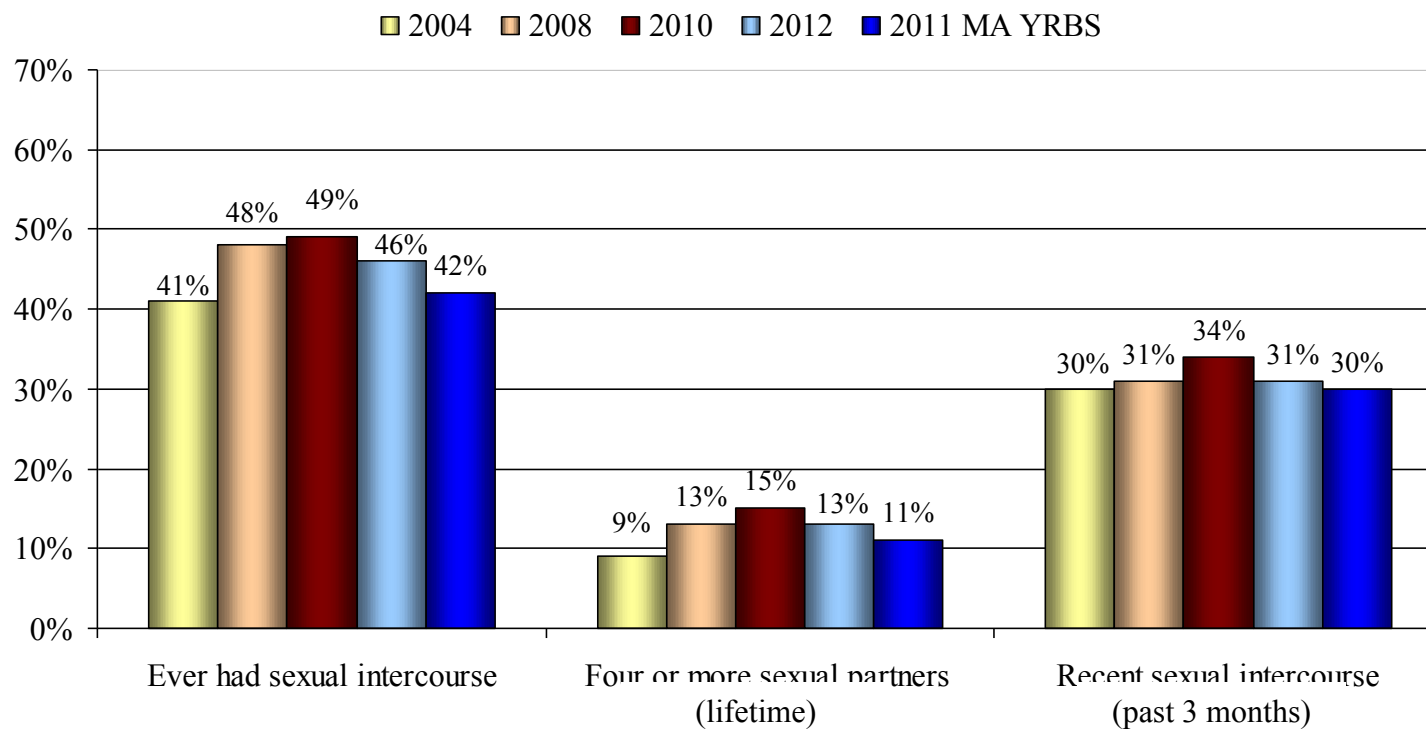
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**ILLEGAL DRUG USE**



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2012 YRBS  
HIGH SCHOOL  
(GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 - COMBINED)**

**DIETARY BEHAVIOR**

