

REPORT ON
THE 2010 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY
FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 7 AND 8
FOR THE
WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PREPARED BY:

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INTRODUCTION

For the second time the Waltham Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to assist in the design and carry out an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which had been implemented with students in grades 7 and 8. This survey was based on one which was developed specifically for middle school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 66 questions. Students responded to 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.

SURVEY PROCESS

It was agreed that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey would be distributed to all students in attendance on the day of the survey from grades 7 and 8. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and four students were withheld at parental request. The survey was implemented on May 20, 2010 and was administered simultaneously to all students by classroom teachers. 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 635 students who responded to the survey, 306 from grade 7 and 324 from grade 8. There were 305 females and 328 males who responded to the survey. Two students did not indicate their gender and five 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 in percentages 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 the Waltham Public Schools. 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 66 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 by grade and gender as well as with the results from the 2008 Waltham Middle School YRBS. 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.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 7 AND 8

VEHICLE RELATED SAFETY

- **10.7%** of all respondents (7.3% - 2008) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car. There was little variation by grade (grade 7 – 9.9%, grade 8 – 11.6%) or gender (females – 8.9%, males – 12.0%).
- **Nearly three respondents in five (59.0%)** (61.3% - 2008) report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. Respondents from grade 7 (56.9%) were less likely to never or rarely wear a bicycle helmet than those from grade 8 (61.1%). Male respondents (66.5%) report lack of bicycle helmet use much more frequently than females (50.9%).
- **23.5%** of all respondents (20.0% - 2008) report having ever ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. There was no variation by grade but was slightly higher among females (females – 25.8%, males – 21.4%).

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **2.4%** of all respondents (5.5% - 2008) **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 7 – 2.6%, grade 8 – 1.6%). There was no variation by gender.
- **6.2%** of all respondents (5.8% - 2008) **report not going to school because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on the way to or from school, at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey.** There was very little variation by grade or gender.
- **More than two-fifths (43.2%)** of all respondents (36.9% - 2008) **report having been bullied at school at least once during the 12 months prior to the survey.** Female respondents report being bullied more frequently than males.

“During the past 12 months, how many times have you been bullied at school?”

“At least once.”

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Grade			
7	47.4%	38.1%	42.7%
8	48.6%	39.0%	43.4%
Total	48.2%	38.4%	43.2%

- **16.7%** of all respondents (14.1% - 2008) **report having hurt or injured themselves on purpose (for example cutting, burning or bruising) at least once during the 12 months prior to the survey** (grade 7 – 18.1%, grade 8 – 15.3%). Female respondents (25.1%) report such self-injury much more frequently than males (8.9%).
- With regard to Internet Safety:
 - **17.5%** of all respondents (12.8% - 2008) (females – 21.5%, males – 13.8%) **report having ever given information about themselves on the internet (other than for purchases) to someone they never met.**
 - **20.0%** of all respondents (13.9% - 2008) (females – 22.8%, males – 17.5%) **report ever meeting someone in person who they initially met over the internet.**
 - **18.1%** of all respondents (females – 23.0%, males – 13.5%) **report having been threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others through electronic communication in any form during the previous 12 months.**
 - For each of the above, eighth grade respondents report these behaviors/experiences more frequently than seventh graders.

SUICIDE

- **14.0%** of all respondents (13.1% - 2008) **report having seriously thought about committing suicide during the 12 months prior to the survey** and **7.3% report having made a plan to do so**. The incidence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide was higher in grade 7 (grade 7 – 15.9%, and grade 8 – 12.0%) and much higher among females (females – 20.8%, males – 7.7%).
- **4.6%** of all respondents (3.9% - 2008) **report having actually tried to commit suicide during the previous 12 months**. The incidence of this behavior was higher among females.

“During the past 12 months, did you actually try to kill yourself?”

“Yes”

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Grade			
7	5.9%	3.3%	4.6%
8	7.5%	1.7%	4.7%
Total	6.6%	2.5%	4.6%

TOBACCO USE

- **19.8%** of all respondents (20.8% - 2008) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking** (even one or two puffs) and **5.2%** of all respondents **report having smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before the age of 12**. The incidence of those having ever tried cigarette smoking was slightly higher for respondents in grade 7 (21.5%) than for respondents in grade 8 (18.6%). There was no variation by gender.
- **9.7%** of all respondents (6.3% - 2008) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**. This recent cigarette use was higher in grade 7 and there was no variation by gender.

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

“At least once”

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Grade			
7	12.3%	12.8%	12.5%
8	7.5%	7.0%	7.2%
Total	9.9%	9.7%	9.7%

- **8.3%** among all respondents (4.7% - 2008) **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**. There was no variation by grade but was higher among males (females – 6.3%, males – 9.8%).

ALCOHOL USE

- **Nearly one-third** of all respondents (**32.9%**) (31.7% - 2008) **report having ever had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips and other than for religious reasons.** By grade, 8th grade respondents (35.3%) were more likely to have ever done so (grade 7 – 30.6%). There was no variation by gender. Further, **13.0%** of all respondents (11.1% - 2008) **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 12.**
- **16.5%** of all respondents (13.4% - 2008) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey.** There was very little variation by grade and females (18.4%) report recent alcohol use more frequently than males (14.5%).

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **12.7%** of all respondents (9.7% - 2008) **report having ever used marijuana**. There was no variation by grade while males report doing so most frequently (females – 10.8%, males 14.6%). Further **8.5%** of all respondents (4.7% - 2008) **report having used marijuana at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey**.
- **3.3%** of all respondents (3.5% - 2008) **report having ever tried any form of cocaine** (grade 7 – 3.0%, grade 8 – 3.7%) (females – 4.7%, males – 2.1%).
- **13.0%** of all respondents (10.4% - 2008) **report having ever sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high**. 7th grade female respondents were most likely to have ever done so. Further, 9.9% report doing so during the previous 30 days.

“Have you ever sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?”

“Yes”

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Grade			
7	18.2%	11.9%	15.0%
8	10.2%	12.1%	11.2%
Total	14.1%	11.9%	13.0%

- **6.2%** of all respondents **report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey**. The incidence of this experience was slightly higher in grade 7 (grade 7 – 7.6%, grade 8 – 5.0%). There was no variation by gender.

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **74.5%** of all respondents (32.7% - 2008) **report having ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school** (grade 7 – 76.0%, grade 8 – 73.3%). Male respondents (77.3%) report receiving this education more frequently than females (71.9%).
- **Over half (57.9%)** of all respondents (59.7% - 2008) **report having not had a conversation with their parents or other adults in their family about sexuality or ways to prevent HIV infection, other STD’s or pregnancy during the 12 months prior to the survey** (grade 7 – 58.7%, grade 8 – 57.0%). Males (62.7%) report not having such a conversation more frequently than females (53.1%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **11.5%** of all respondents (15.6% - 2008) **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. There was little variation by grade or gender. Further, **2.7%** (4.9% - 2008) **report having done so for the first time before the age of 12**.

“Have you ever had sexual intercourse?”

“Yes”

Grade	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
7	7.2%	13.7%	10.7%
8	13.2%	11.6%	12.3%
Total	10.0%	12.5%	11.5%

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While **60.3%** of all respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight**, **48.4%** (44.6% - 2008) **were trying to lose weight** and **10.9%** **were trying to gain weight**. Females (54.6%) were more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (42.4%).
- During the previous 30 days, in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:
 - **67.3%** of all respondents (62.0% - 2008) **report having exercised**. (females – 66.9%, males – 67.6%)
 - **38.7%** of all respondents (34.5% - 2008) **report having ever eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat**. (females – 43.2%, males – 34.7%)
 - **7.4%** of all respondents (7.4% - 2008) **report having ever gone without eating for 24 hours or more**. (females – 9.9%, males – 5.0%)
 - **2.7%** of all respondents (1.7% - 2008) **report having ever taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice**. (females – 4.0%, males – 1.6%)
 - **2.7%** of all respondents (2.7% - 2008) **report having vomited or taken laxatives**. (females – 4.0%, males – 1.6%)
- **43.7%** of all respondents (42.4% - 2008) **report eating breakfast on all seven days during the week prior to the survey** (grade 7 – 46.5%, grade 8 – 40.9%). Male respondents (51.3%) report eating breakfast on all seven days more frequently than females (35.9%). Further, **10.6%** **report having not eaten breakfast at all during the previous week**.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **Three-quarters (74.3%)** of all respondents (67.6% - 2008) **report having exercised or participated in physical activity for at least 20 minutes on at least three occasions during the seven days prior to the survey** (grade 7 – 71.8%, grade 8 – 76.0%). Male respondents (80.2%) report such regular exercise more frequently than females (67.8%).
- **36.5%** of all respondents (46.0% - 2008) **report that they watch television 3 hours or more per day on an average school day**. There was no variation by grade while male respondents (40.1%) report doing so more frequently than females (32.8%).

APPENDIX

TO THE REPORT ON THE

2010 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

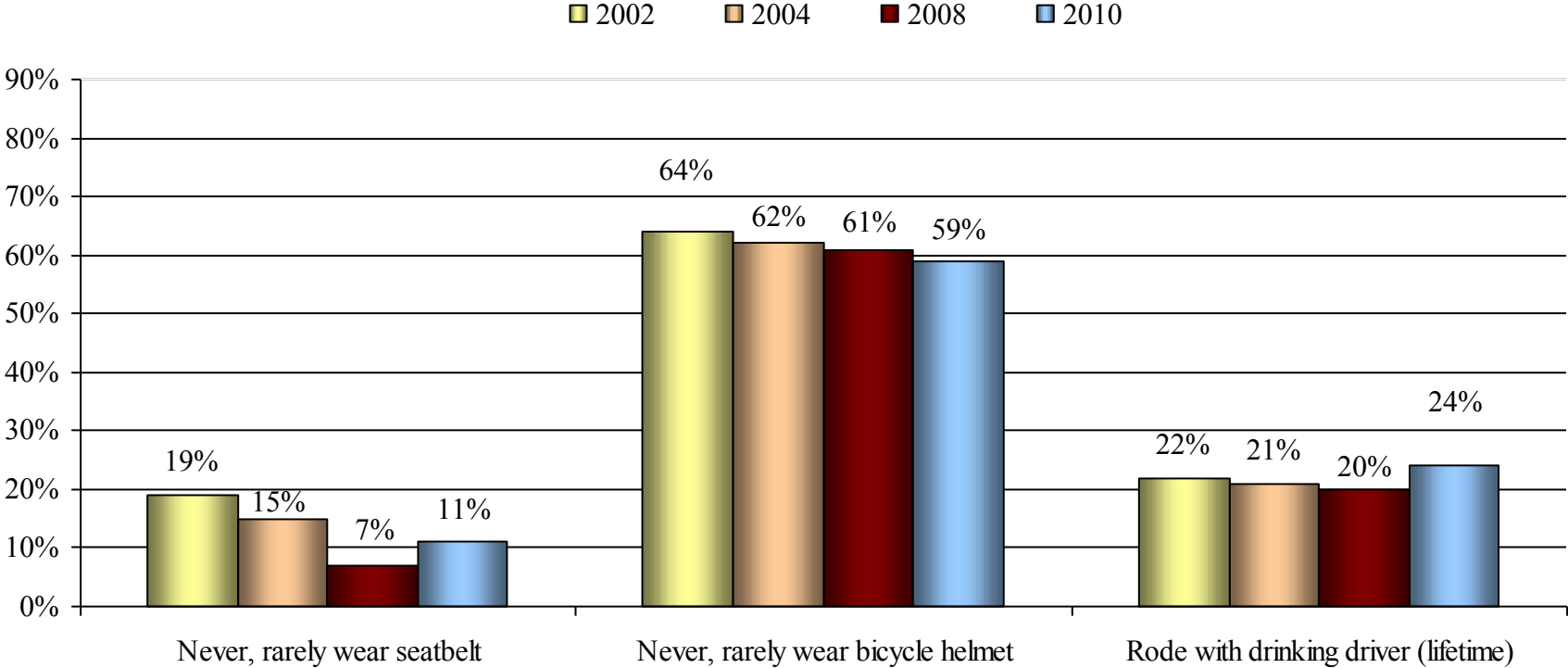
FOR THE

WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

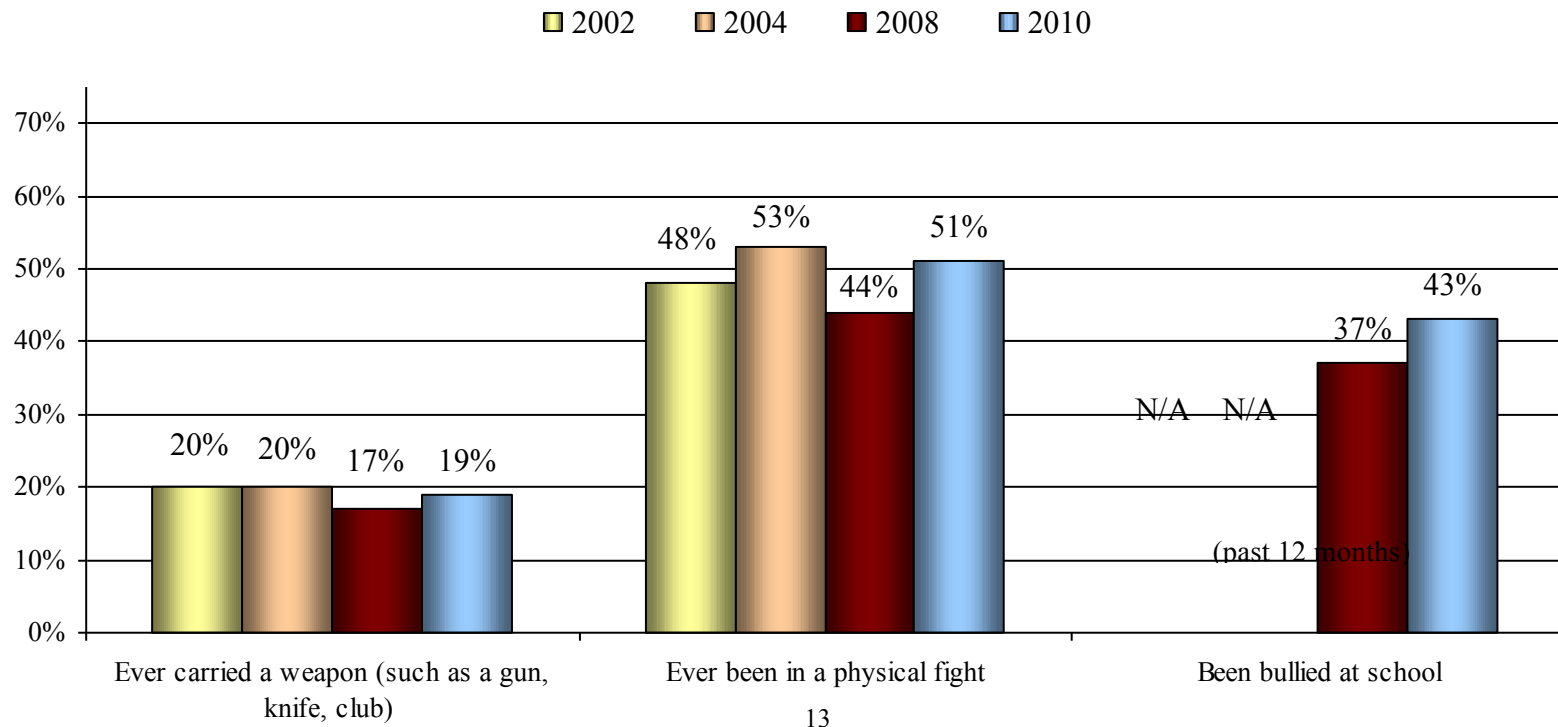
(GRADES 7 AND 8)

**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)
VEHICLE RELATED SAFETY**



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

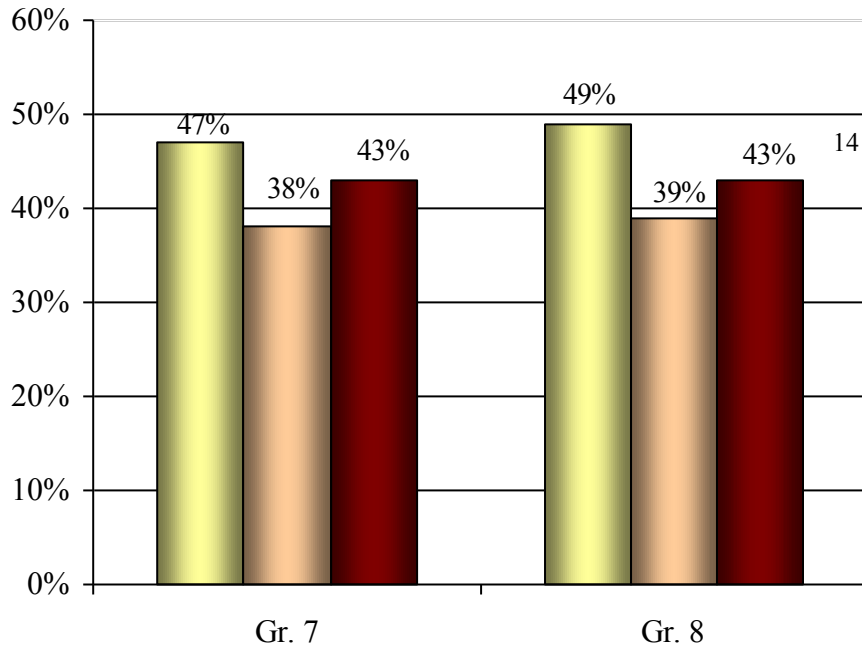


**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

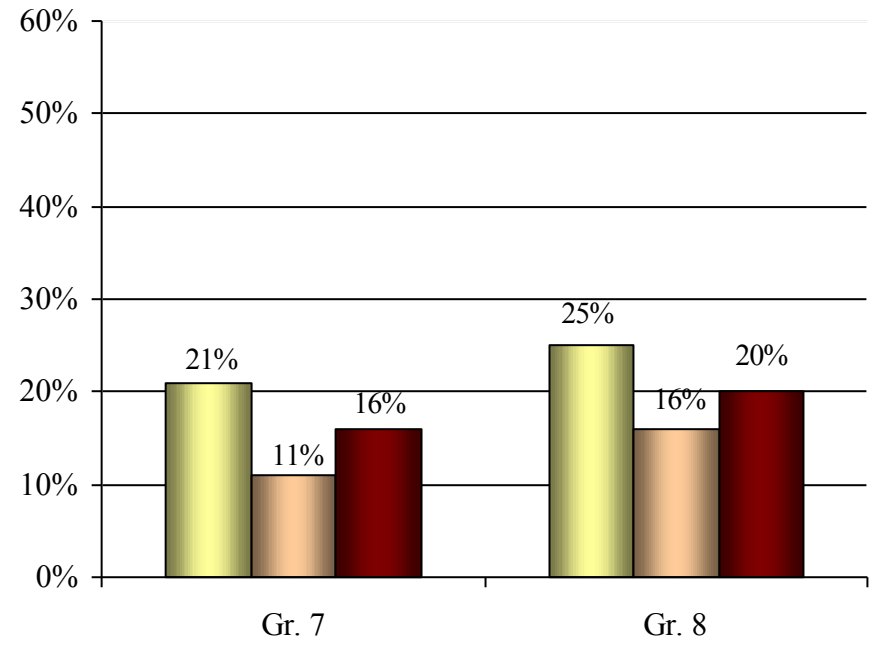
Been bullied at school
(past 12 months)

Female Male Total



Experienced cyber-bullying
(past 12 months)

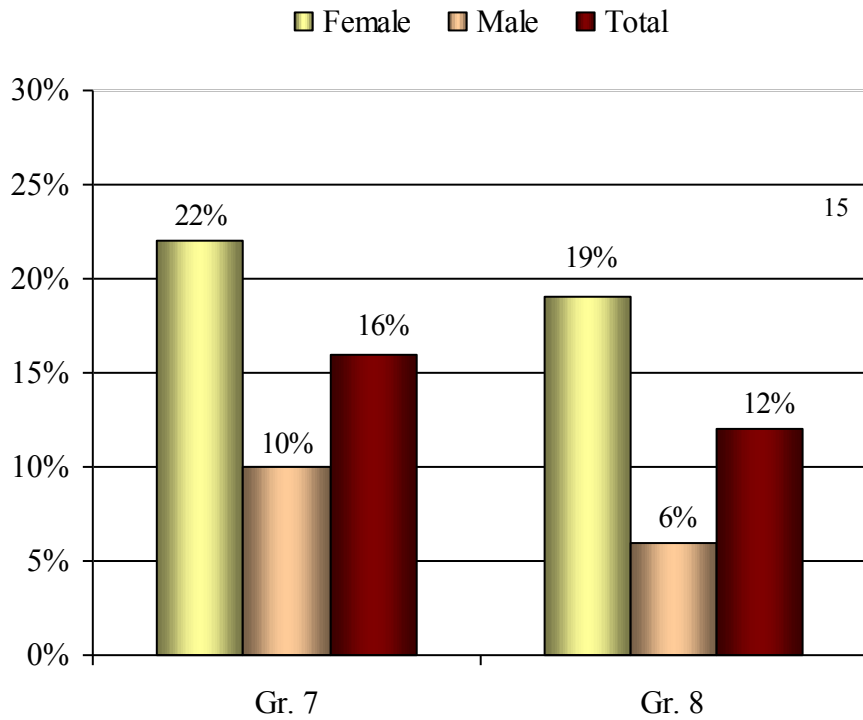
Female Male Total



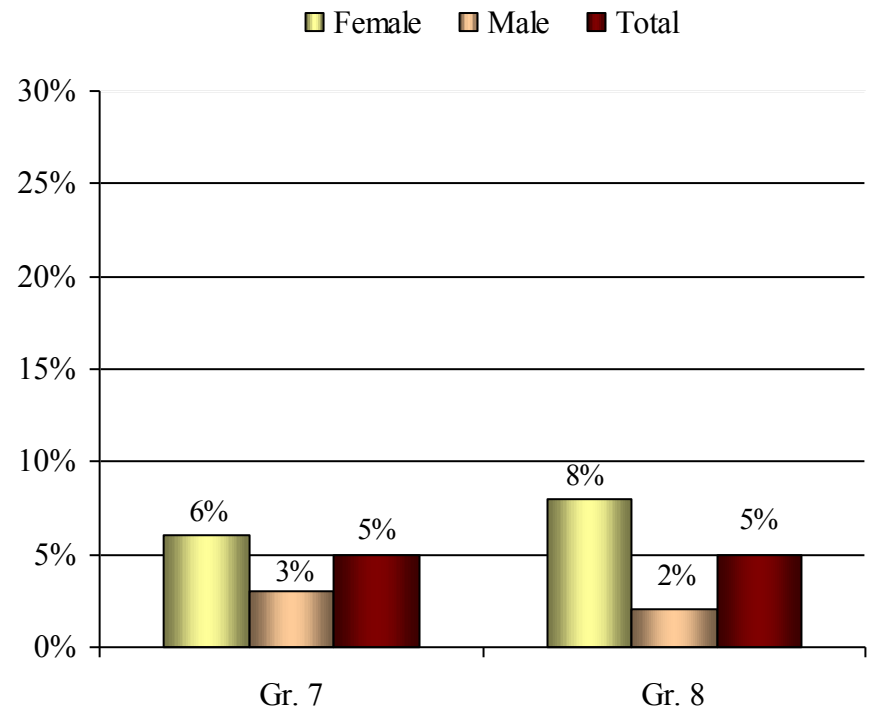
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

SUICIDE

Seriously thought about killing yourself
(past 12 months)

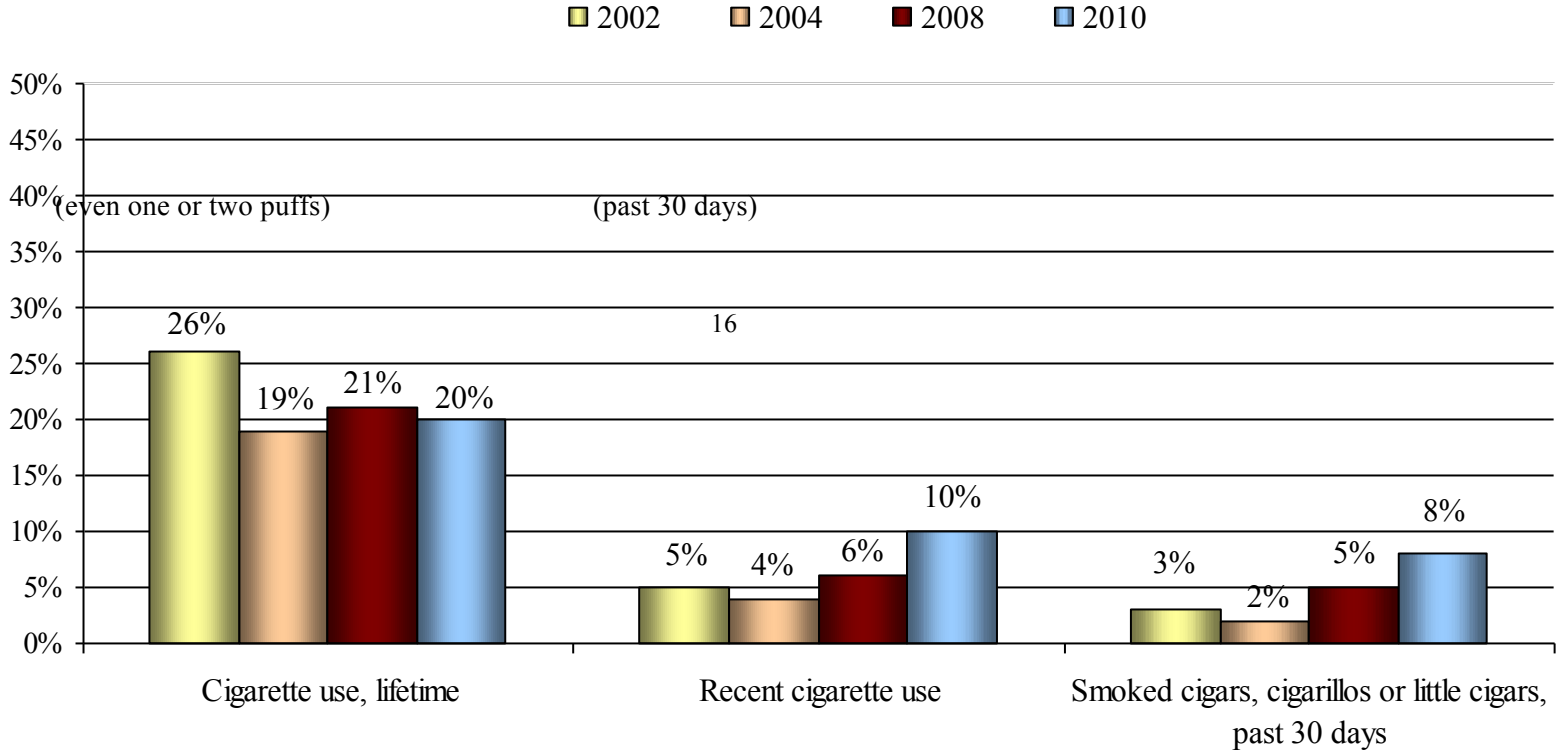


Tried to kill yourself
(past 12 months)



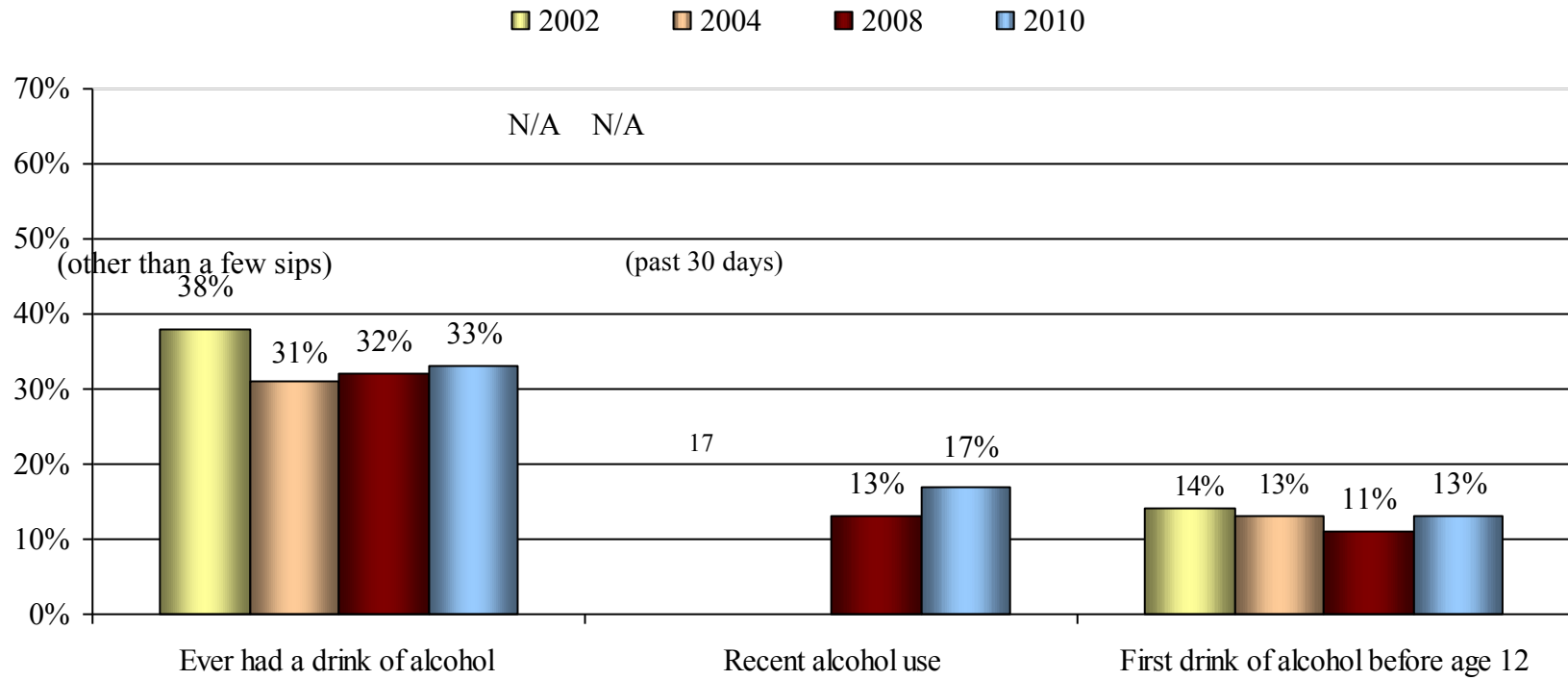
**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

TOBACCO USE



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

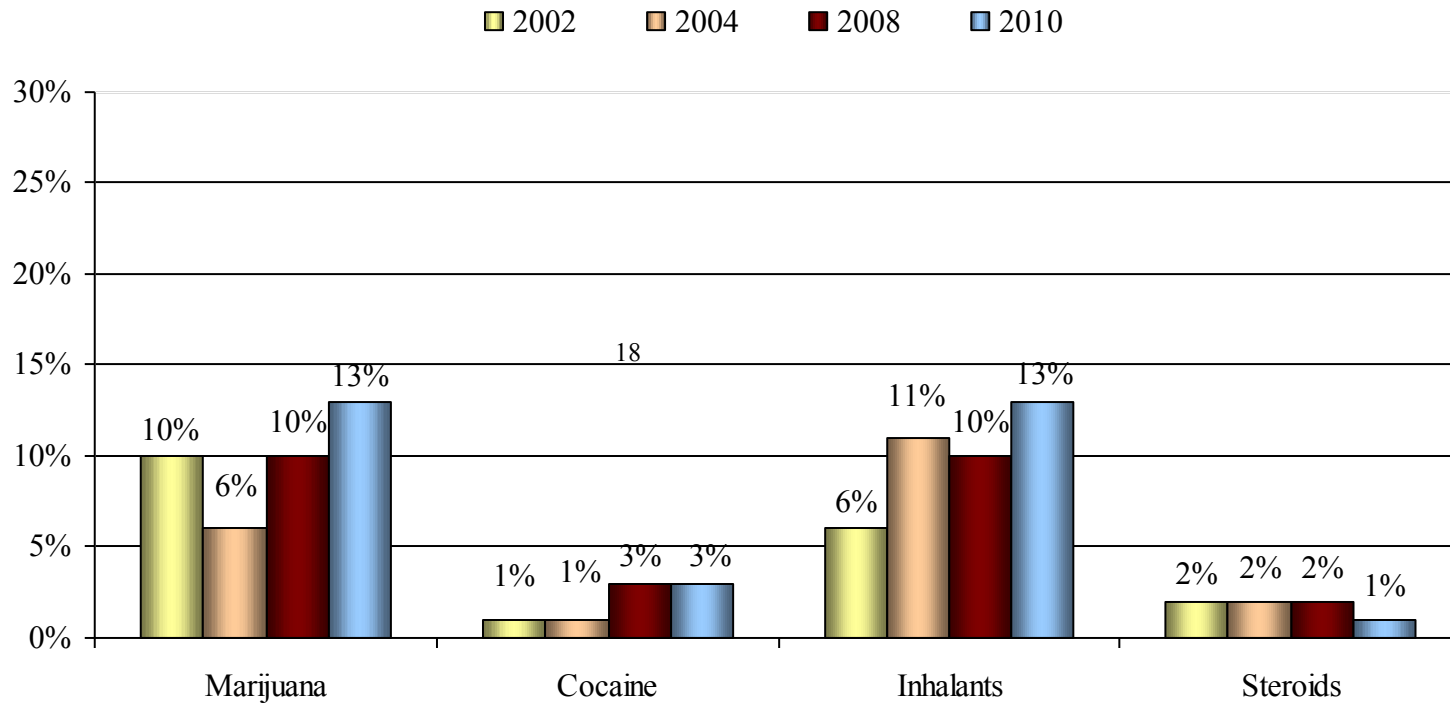
ALCOHOL USE



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

LIFETIME USE



**WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2010 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

