



Photo by Chang Duong

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY WALTHAM 2021 REPORT

High school and middle school findings



WALTHAM
PARTNERSHIP
FOR YOUTH



RESEARCH GROUP

Introduction

ABOUT THE YRBS

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) monitors the prevalence of health risk behaviors that are often established during adolescence and contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults.

These include:

- Behaviors that contribute to injuries and violence,
- Sexual behaviors related to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections,
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use,
- Depression, anxiety, and suicide, and
- Weight control and physical activity.¹

The YRBS is conducted every two years nationally by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state-wide in Massachusetts by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Department of Public Health (DPH).

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) Overview, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/overview.htm>, last updated June 14, 2018.

Introduction

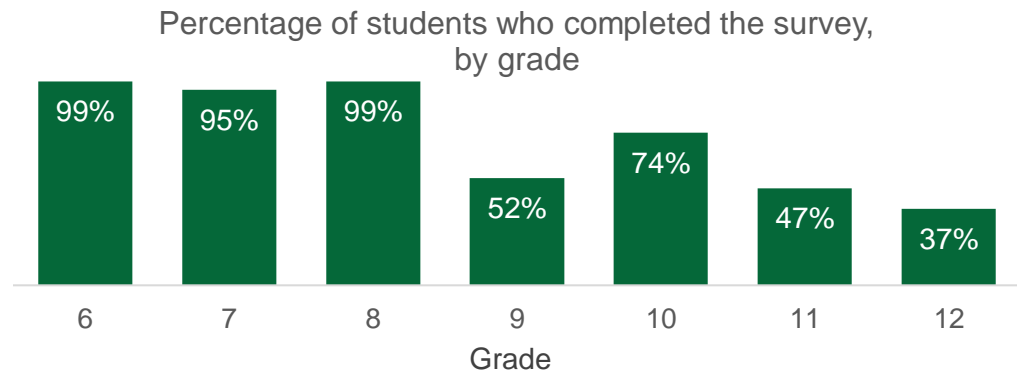
YRBS IN WALTHAM

The Waltham Partnership for Youth (WPY) is a community-based non-profit organization that is committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for youth in Waltham.

WPY identifies what youth need to thrive and mobilizes community resources to address those needs.

In Waltham, the YRBS is administered every two years to all students at the high school and middle schools. WPY supports survey administration, produces this report in partnership with MXM Research Group, and disseminates findings in collaboration with school and community partners through the [WPY Coalition](#). This work is supported through funding from a Drug-free Communities (DFC) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2021, 54% of Waltham High School students and 95% of middle school students completed the survey. These completion rates are lower than previous years (68% and 92%, respectively), possibly due to adjusted survey protocol to accommodate hybrid in-school *and* in-home remote learning environments, as well as fatigue on teachers and students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was administered online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. After data cleaning, the final sample sizes are 678 at the high school and 1,103 for the two middle schools. See [Annex A. Methodology](#) for details on survey administration.



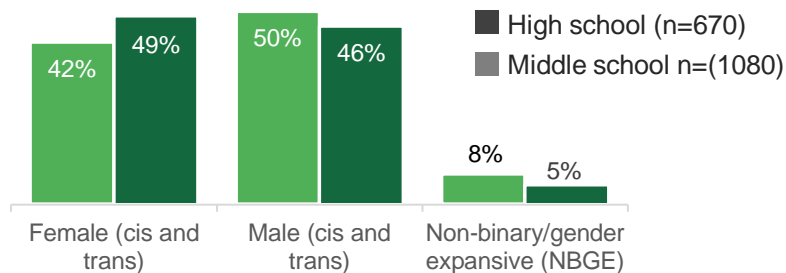
Introduction

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

This report disaggregates key findings by race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. While the categories in each **do not** reflect the full diversity of the student body, they enable comparisons for the school district and youth service providers while protecting student anonymity. See [Annex B. Additional Demographics](#) for further breakdown in each category.

Gender identity: Whereas most students identify as cisgender male or female, less than 2% of students are transgender (1.5% high school; 0.6% middle schools). At the high school, 5% of students are non-binary, gender expansive, or questioning. This percentage is slightly higher at the middle schools (8%).

Figure 1. Current gender identity



NBGE includes students who are non-binary, gender expansive, and questioning

Figure 2. Race and ethnicity

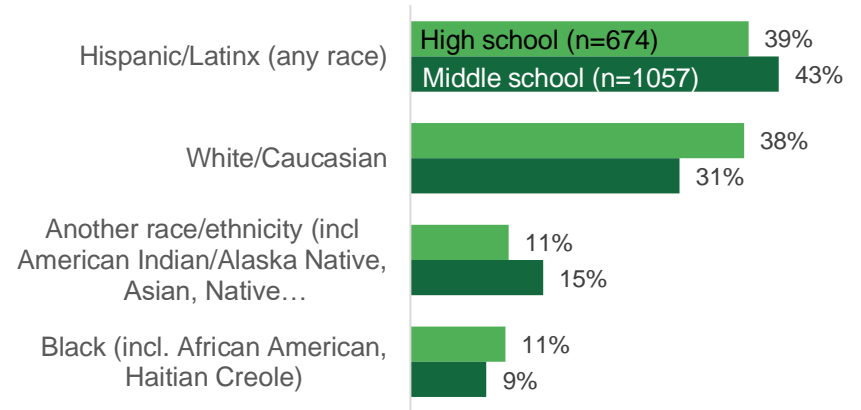
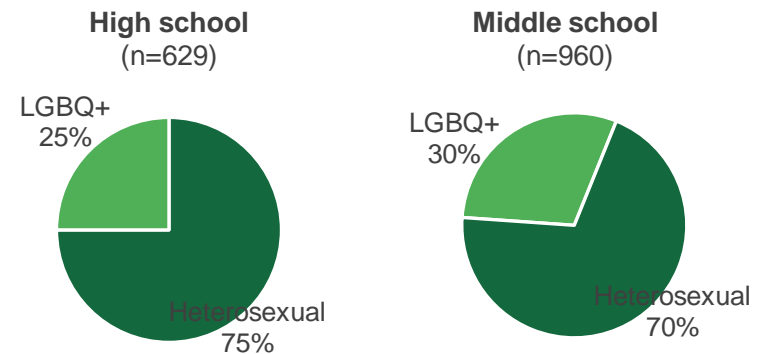


Figure 3. Sexual orientation



Introduction

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Throughout the report, key findings are featured in both text and chart form presented on the left and across the bottom. Related findings are presented on the right.

All findings are calculated as percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent.

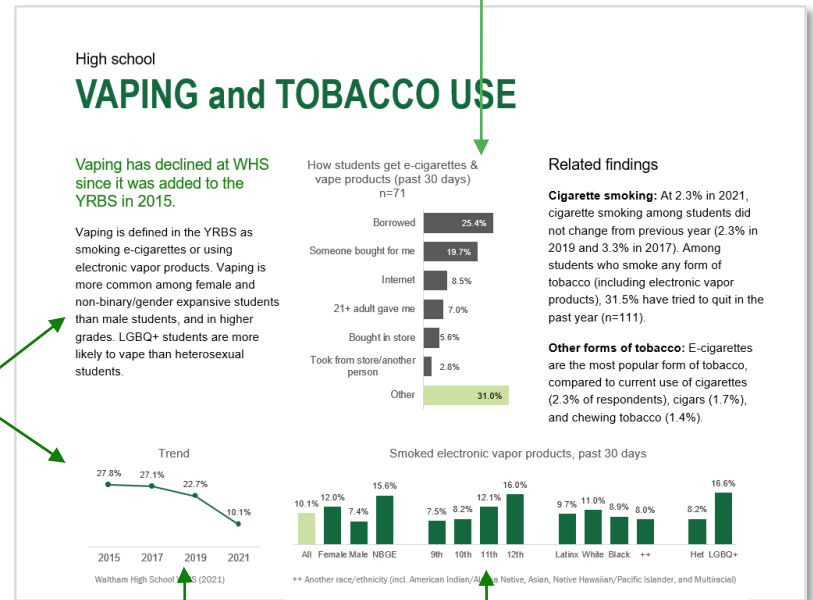
Quick Access:

- [High school results](#)
- [Middle school results](#)
- [Annex](#)

Key findings, also illustrated in charts across the bottom

Where possible, 2021 data are compared to data from previous years.

Related findings



All key findings are broken down by gender identity, grade, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation

HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

SUBSTANCE USE

PERSONAL SAFETY

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

ASSETS & PROTECTIVE FACTORS



[SKIP TO MIDDLE SCHOOL RESULTS](#)

SUBSTANCE USE

TOBACCO
ALCOHOL
MARIJUANA
ILLEGAL DRUGS

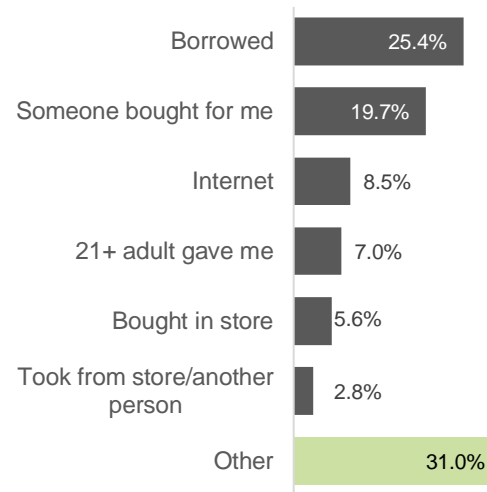
High school

VAPING and TOBACCO USE

Vaping has declined at WHS since it was added to the YRBS in 2015.

Vaping is defined in the YRBS as smoking e-cigarettes or using electronic vapor products. Vaping is more common among female and non-binary/gender expansive students than male students, and in higher grades. LGBTQ+ students are more likely to vape than heterosexual students.

How students get e-cigarettes & vape products (past 30 days)
n=71

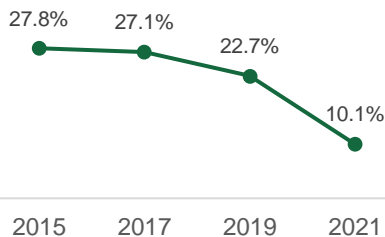


Related findings

Cigarette smoking: At 2.3% in 2021, cigarette smoking among students did not change from previous year (2.3% in 2019 and 3.3% in 2017). Among students who smoke any form of tobacco (including electronic vapor products), 31.5% have tried to quit in the past year (n=111).

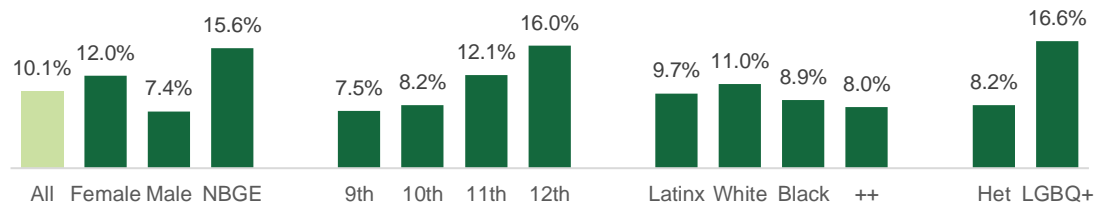
Other forms of tobacco: E-cigarettes are the most popular form of tobacco, compared to current use of cigarettes (2.3% of respondents), cigars (1.7%), and chewing tobacco (1.4%).

Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

Smoked electronic vapor products, past 30 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)

High school

ALCOHOL USE

Since 2015, alcohol use has decreased by more than half. During the pandemic, one in six students drank alcohol.

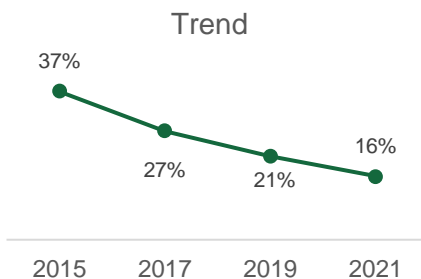
Drinking is more common among females and non-binary/gender expansive students compared to males. High school seniors are two times more likely to drink than students in grades 9-11. White students are most likely to drink.

Related findings

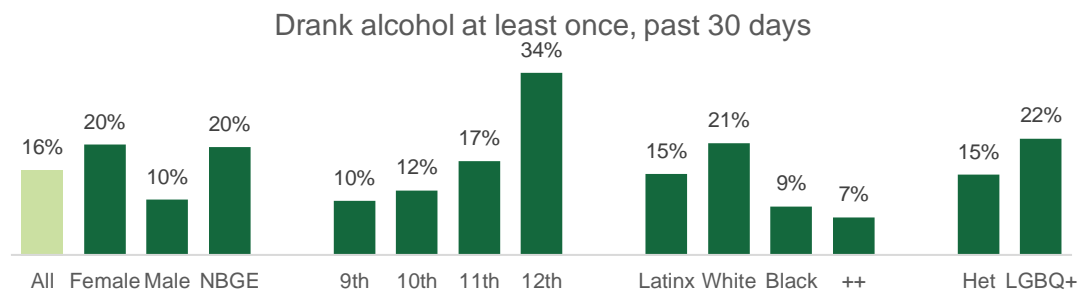
Binge drinking:* 5.9% of all respondents engaged in binge drinking at least once in the past 30 days. Again, high school seniors were two times more likely to binge drink (11.8%) compared to their peers in grades 9, 10, and 11 (5.9%, 2.7%, and 7.6%, respectively).

*Defined as consuming five or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours.

Parents' awareness about drinking: More than half of respondents who drink said their parents *do not know* they drink (55.9%). 4.4% said their parents know they drink but do not know how much, and 16.8% said their parents know they drink *and* know how much they drink.



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 9

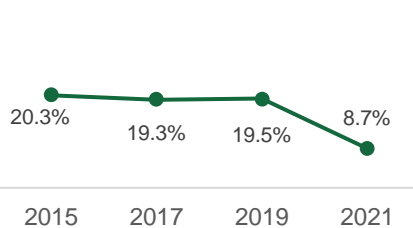
High school

MARIJUANA USE

Use of marijuana remained constant in recent years until the COVID-19 pandemic when it halved.

Marijuana use increases in high grades and is more common among non-binary/gender expansive students, LGBTQ+ students, and Black students.

Trend

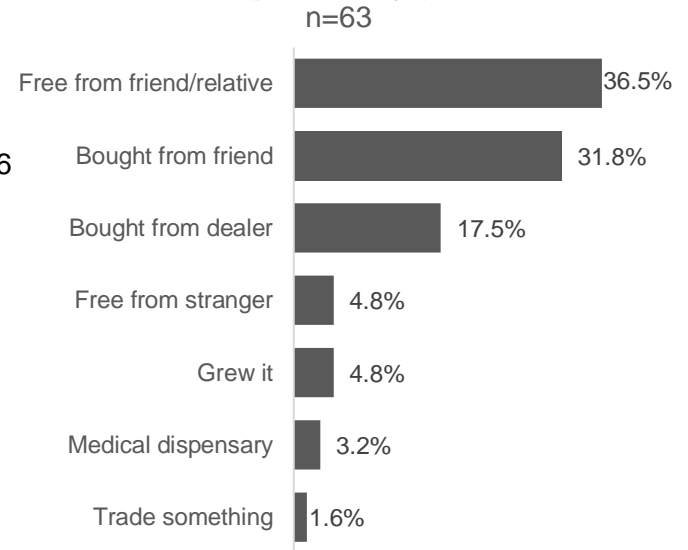


Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

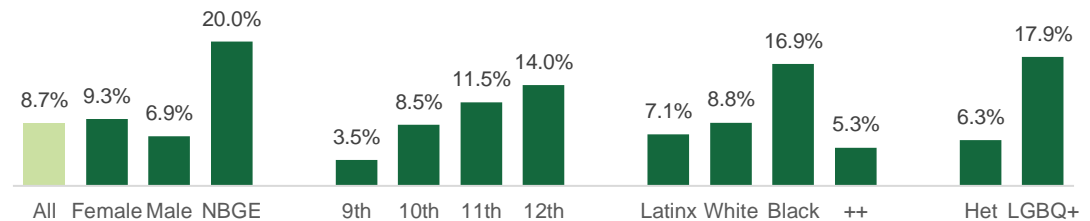
Related findings

First try: Many students who use marijuana tried it for the first time at ages 13 or 14 (39.9%), although *most* tried it for the first time at ages 15 or 16 (42.1%).

How students get marijuana products (past 30 days)



Used marijuana at least once, past 30 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 10

High school

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Illegal drug use among students at Waltham High School continues to decrease and remains low compared use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

The percentage of respondents saying they have used prescription stimulants or sedatives without a doctor's prescription in their lifetimes has decreased compared to 2019. Lifetime use of cocaine had a small reduction compared to 2019.

Misuse of prescription pain medication has decreased from 2.4% in 2019 to 1.6% in 2021.

Ever used an illegal substance (lifetime use)

	2019	2021	Trend
Hallucinogens	2.8%	2.9%	↑
Rx stimulants	3.0%	2.5%	↓
Cocaine	1.8%	1.7%	↓
Rx pain medication	2.4%	1.6%	↓
Inhalants	1.7%	1.6%	↓
Methamphetamines	1.1%	1.1%	↓
Steroids	1.5%	0.9%	↓
Heroin	1.1%	0.9%	↓
Ecstasy	1.6%	0.9%	↓

PERSONAL SAFETY

VIOLENCE-RELATED
BEHAVIOR
BULLYING
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
DISTRACTED DRIVING

High school

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIOR

5.9% have been involved in a physical fight off school property during the past 12 months.

Male students are more likely to have been involved in a physical fight compared to female and NBGE students. Black students appear to be more at risk for being involved in physical fights than students of other backgrounds.

Related findings

Threatened or injured at school: 2.5% of respondents have been threatened or injured at school in the past year. This is a reduction from 2019 (3.2%).

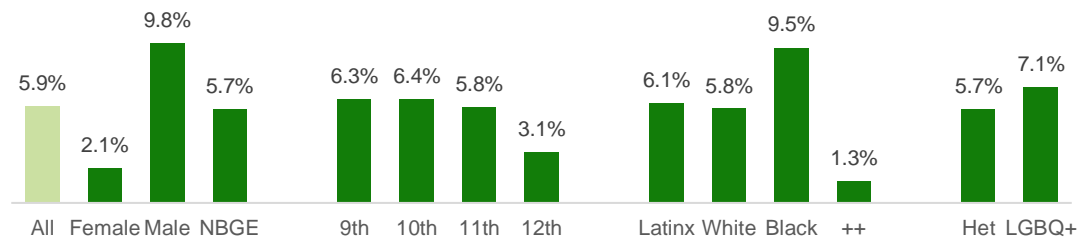
Carried a weapon: 2.7% of WHS students have access to a gun (lower than 2019, 3.7%). Less than 1% of students (0.6%) said they carried a gun in the last 12 months, and 3.1% carried any form of weapon during the last 30 days.

Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2019)

Involved in a physical fight off school property, past 12 months



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)₁₃

High school

BULLYING

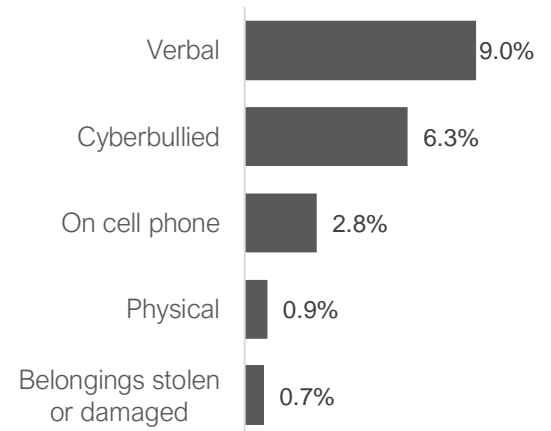
The percentage of students that experience bullying has continued to decline.

However, students that are non-binary/gender expansive are **nearly three times more likely** to experience bullying compared to young men and women, as are students who are LGBTQ+ compared to their straight peers.

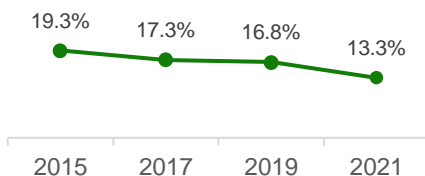
Related findings

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying has declined from previous years (22.2% in 2015 and 6.7% in 2017).

Forms of bullying experienced, past year

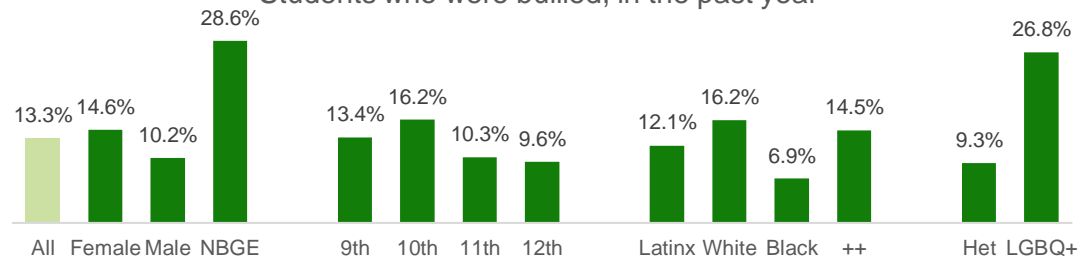


Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

Students who were bullied, in the past year



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 14

High school

DATING and SEXUAL VIOLENCE

7.3% of students have experienced forced sexual activity *by anyone* in the past year (ranging from kissing, touching, and sexual intercourse).

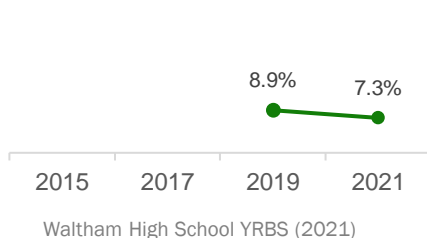
LGBQ+ students have experienced more forced sexual activity than straight students.

Related findings

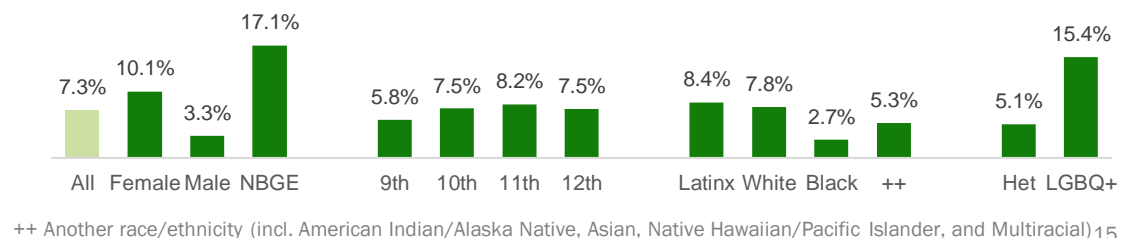
Controlling behavior by a partner: 18.2% have experienced at least one of the following controlling behaviors by a partner: monitored cell phone use; called or texted multiple times a day to monitor whereabouts; prevented the student from doing things with friends; got angry if the student was talking to someone else; or prevented the student from going to school.

Physical violence by a partner: 2% of students have experienced physical violence by a partner at least once in the past year, including being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon.

Trend



Experienced forced sexual activity by anyone, past year



High school

IMPAIRED and DISTRACTED DRIVING

Among students who drive,* one quarter texted or emailed while driving in the past 30 days.

Latinx students are more likely to text while driving compared to white (23.3%), multiracial (13.3%) and Black students (23.8%).

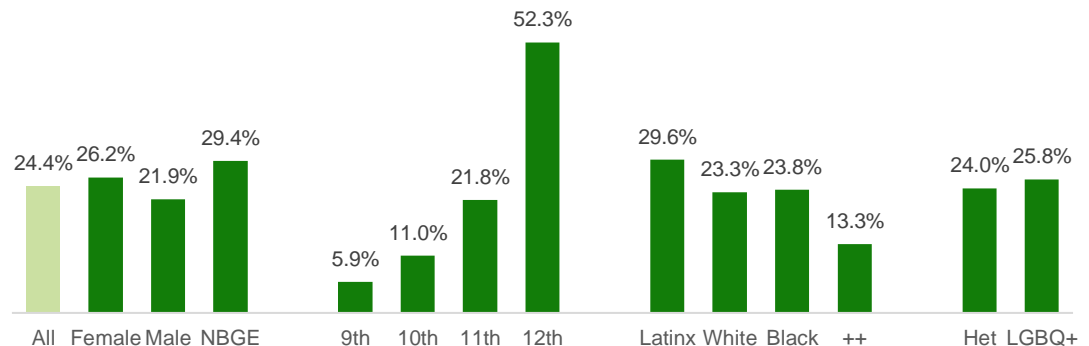
*This calculation excludes students who selected "I did not drive a car or other vehicle during the past 30 days." Most 9th and 10th graders are not old enough to drive a car.

Related findings

Driving under the influence of alcohol: Among students who drive, 3.4% of students drove when they had consumed alcohol. This is a decrease from 2019 where 5.3% of students drove under the influence of alcohol.

Driving under the influence of marijuana: Among students who drive, 6.3% have driven under the influence of marijuana during the past 30 days.

Texted or emailed while driving, past 30 days (n=270)



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

STRESS

DEPRESSION

SUICIDE

EATING & BODY IMAGE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

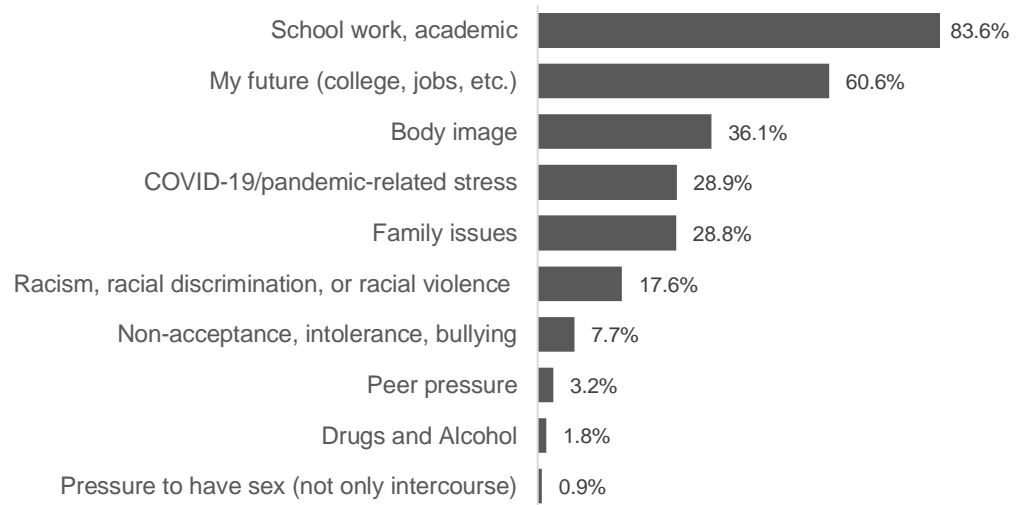
High school

STRESS

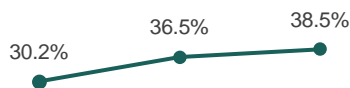
One out of three students experienced frequent overwhelming stress during the past year (38.5%). This represents an increase from 2019.*

Female and non-binary/gender expansive students two times more likely to experience frequent overwhelming stress compared to male students. More than half of LGBTQ+ students also experienced frequent overwhelming stress.

Causes of stress (n=678)



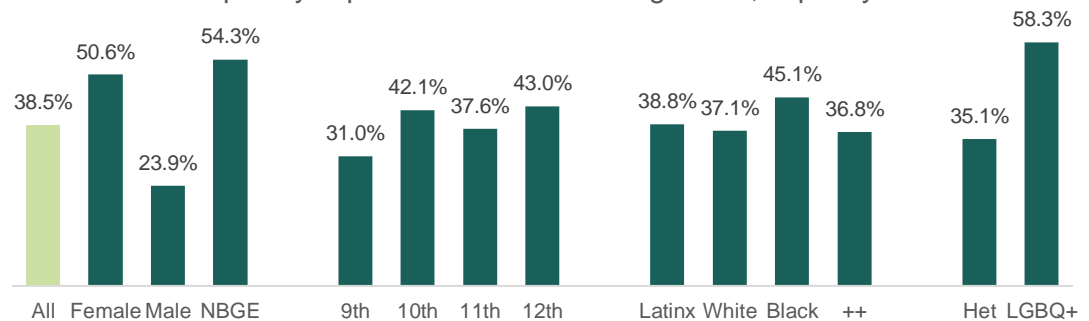
Trend



2017 2019 2021

Waltham High School YRBS (2019)

Frequently experienced overwhelming stress, in past year



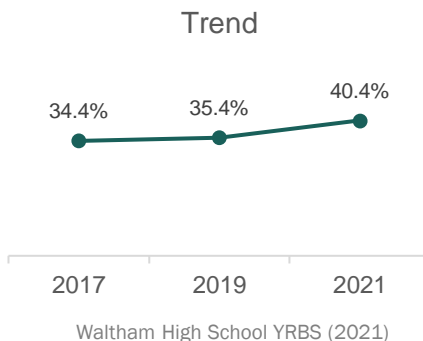
++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 18

High school

DEPRESSION and SUICIDE

Depression among students has continued to increase.

Similar to patterns seen in stress, females and non-binary/gender expansive students are twice as likely to experience depression as males, as are LGBTQ+ students compared to their straight peers. Students of color are more likely to experience depression than their white peers.



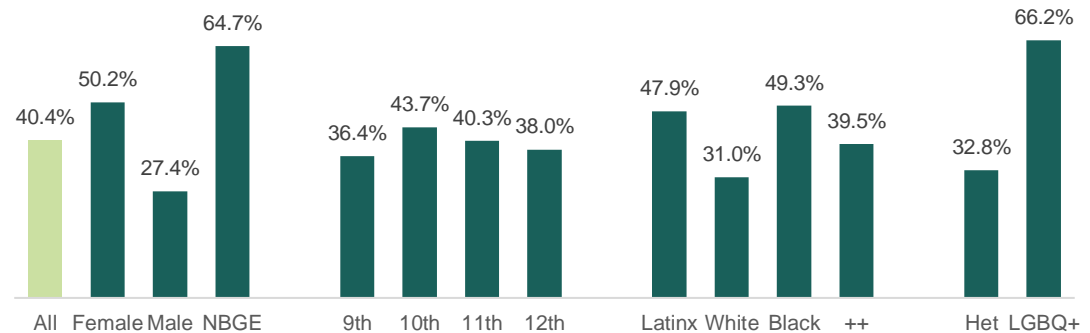
Related findings

Self-harm: 14.2% of all respondents harmed themselves on purpose (without the intention of suicide).

Considered suicide: The percentage of students that considered suicide increased from 13.2% in 2019 to 14.2% in 2021.

Attempted suicide. 6.2% of respondents attempted suicide in the last year.

Experienced depression, in the past year



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 19

High school

EATING and BODY IMAGE

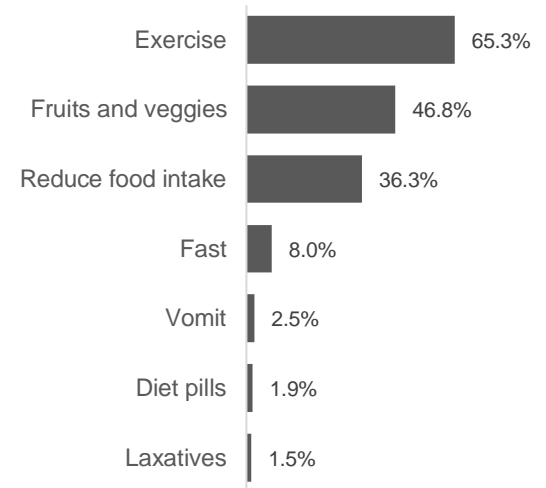
Only one-third of all respondents ate breakfast everyday for the past 7 days.

12.7% of students skipped breakfast every day in the last 7 days (15.5% in 2019 and 12.4% in 2017).

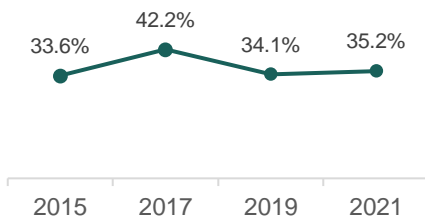
Related findings

Body image: One-third of respondents feel they are overweight (34.8%), 21.4% feel they are underweight, and 43.8% feel they are about the right weight.

Weight control techniques used, past 30 days

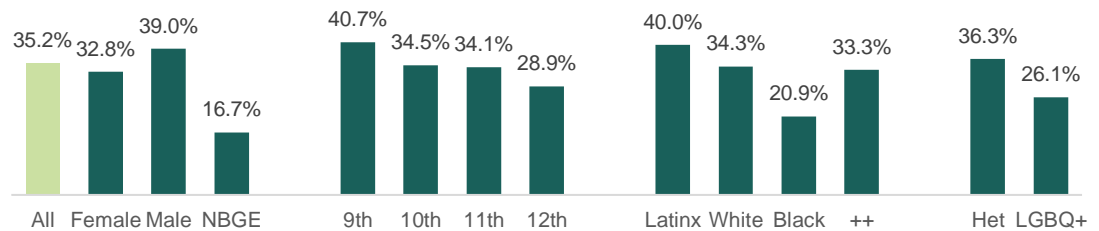


Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

Ate breakfast every day for the past 7 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)²⁰

High school

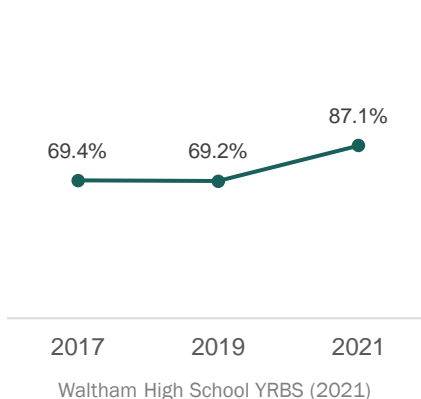
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and SLEEP

On an average school day, most students (87.1%) spend 3 or more hours in front of a screen for activities not related to school.

Screens include TVs, computers, phones, and other handheld devices. This represents an increase of more than 26% from previous years.

See charts below.

Trend

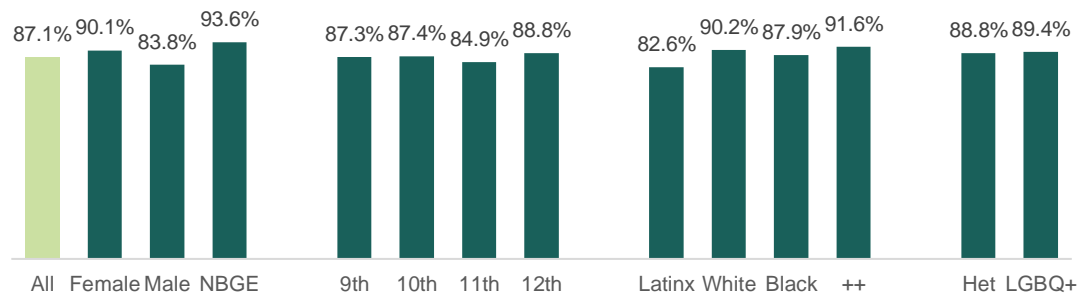


Related findings

Exercise: Three quarters of students (73%) exercise regularly (on at least 3 of the past 7 days). This is higher than 2019 (66%) but less than in 2017 (76.4%).

Sleep: More than a half of respondents sleep 7 or more hours on an average night (60%). One third (33.7%) sleep for 5-6 hours and 6.8% get 4 hours of sleep or less.

Spend 3+ hours of non-school-related screen time, on average school day



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 21

High school

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

On out of five students have had sexual intercourse in their lifetimes and 28.2% have ever had sexual contact.

Sexual activity increases by grade and is highest among Latinx and LGBTQ+ students.

See charts below.

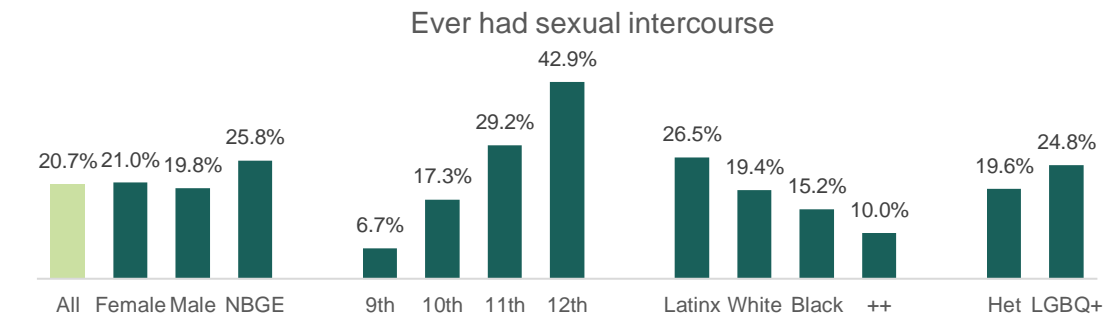
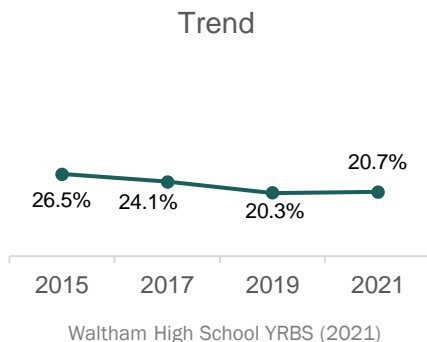
Related findings

First sexual intercourse: 6.5% had sexual contact for the first time before age 13. 3% had sexual intercourse before age 13. The age of first sexual intercourse has declined since 2015 (6.8% in 2015, 3.6% in 2017, and 3.4% in 2019).

Sexual partners: 4.7% have had sexual intercourse with four or more partners in their lifetime. This proportion is lower than previous years (10.1% in 2015, 9.4% in 2017, and 6.8% in 2019).

Condom use: More than half of students (58.7%) said they or their partner used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse (of students who have ever had sexual intercourse, n=74).

Sex education: Only half of students (54%) say they have been taught about HIV or AIDS in school. 59.4% have *not* had conversations with parents or other adult relatives about sexuality or safe sex in the past year.



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)²²

ASSETS & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

VOLUNTEERING,
SPORTS, & ACTIVITIES

TRUSTED ADULTS

High school

VOLUNTEERING, SPORTS, & ACTIVITIES

Half of students (48.6%) participate in extracurricular activities.

Participation in organized extracurricular activities is low among Latinx students compared to their peers.

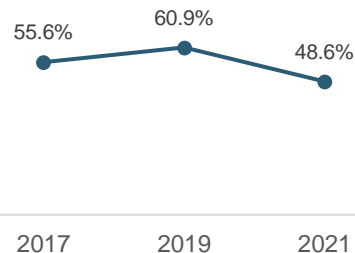
Related findings

Volunteering: 42.5% of students volunteer for at least one hour in an average month. Similar to extracurricular activities, fewer Latinx students volunteer (32.9%) compared to white, multiracial and black students (50.8%, 44.3% and 43.8%, respectively).

School sports: 41% of students played on at least one school sports team. Males (45.4%) participate in school sports teams more than female and NBGE students (39.2% and 22.6%, respectively). Fewer Latinx students participate in school sports (23.6%) compared to white, multiracial and Black students (56.1%, 47.1% and 43.8%, respectively).

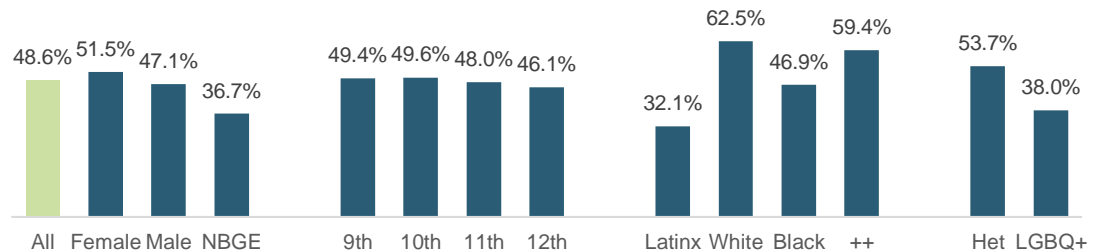
Community sports: 28.8% of respondents play on at least one community sports team.

Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

Participated in organized extracurricular activities, past week



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)²⁴

High school

TRUSTED ADULTS

62.3% of WHS students have a trusted adult at school they can talk to if they have a problem.

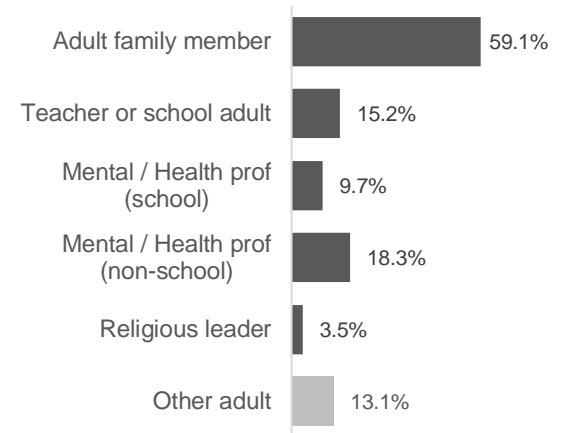
White students are more likely to have trusted adults at school than Latinx, multiracial and Black students. See charts below.

Related findings

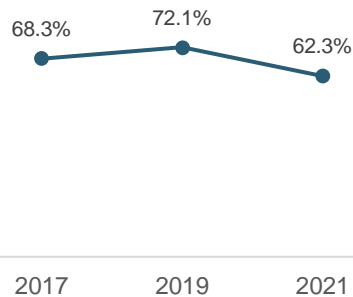
Trusted adults outside of school: Most students (82.5%) have a trusted adult outside of school. Of these, 64% have a trusted parent or other adult family member, 4.6% have a trusted non-family adult (e.g., religious leader, club advisor, neighbor), and 31.5% have both.

Half of students (47.5%) have *needed to* talk to an adult in the past year about how they were feeling or about a problem.

Which adults did you talk to about problems? (in past 12 months)

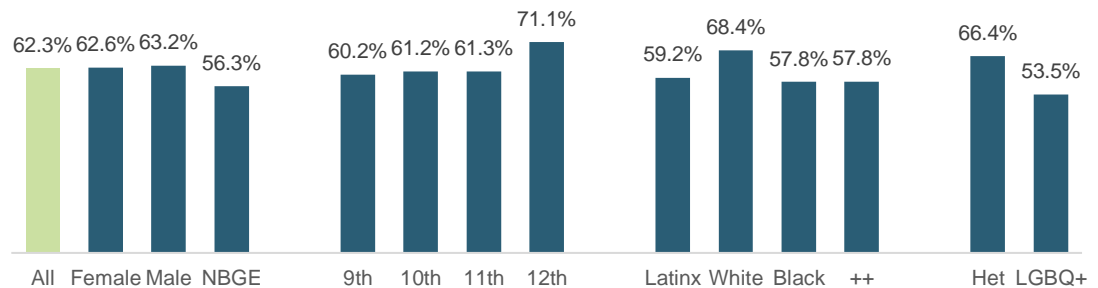


Trend



Waltham High School YRBS (2021)

Have a trusted adult at Waltham High School



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)²⁵

MIDDLE SCHOOL RESULTS

SUBSTANCE USE

PERSONAL SAFETY

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

ASSETS & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

SUBSTANCE USE

TOBACCO
ALCOHOL
MARIJUANA
ILLEGAL DRUGS

Middle school

VAPING and TOBACCO USE

Vaping has decreased among middle school students in the past 2 years.

Vaping is more common among females and non-binary/gender expansive students than males and increases as students get older. Latinx students are more likely to vape than white, black, or multiracial students.

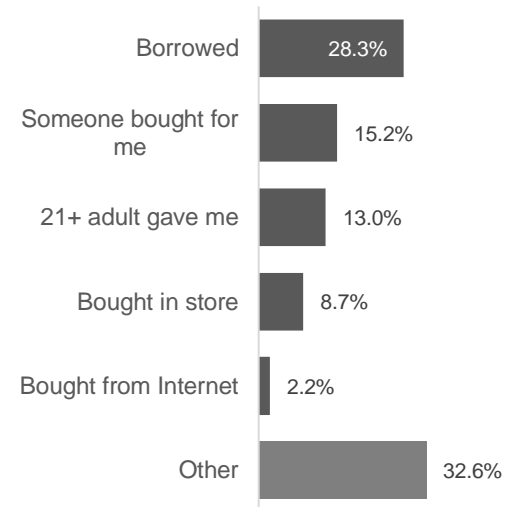
See charts below.

Related findings

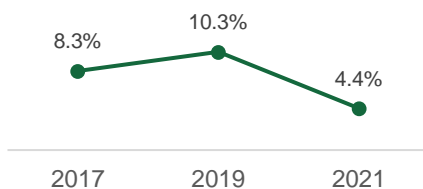
Ease of purchase: 13.2% of students say e-cigarettes and vapes can be easily purchased. This has decreased from 26.8% in 2019.

Cigarette smoking: 1.4% of students smoke cigarettes, slightly increasing from 1.2% in 2019.

How students get e-cigarettes & vape products (past 30 days)

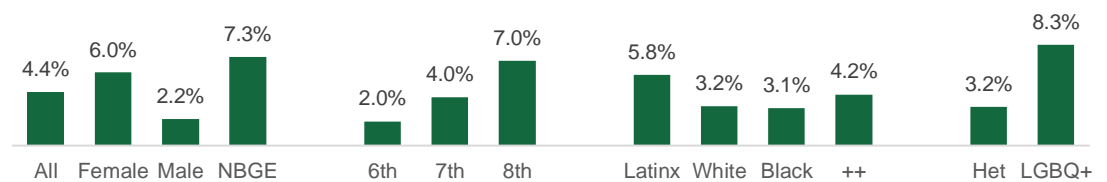


Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Smoked electronic vapor products, past 30 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 28

Middle school

ALCOHOL USE

Drinking among middle school students is at a six-year low.

17.8% have tried alcohol in their lifetime. 4.4% had their first drink before age 12 and 6.5% had their first drink at ages 12 or 13.

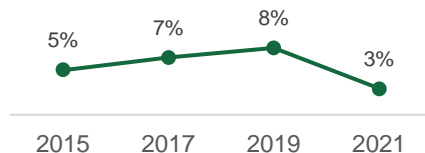
Related findings

Ease of purchase: 27% of students say they can easily access alcohol. Of the students who drank alcohol in the past 30 days, 25.6% have obtained it from parents/guardians and 28.2% from their homes without parent/guardian consent.

Peer disapproval: 58.1% of students believe that their friends would find it very wrong if they drank 1 to 2 alcoholic beverages every day.

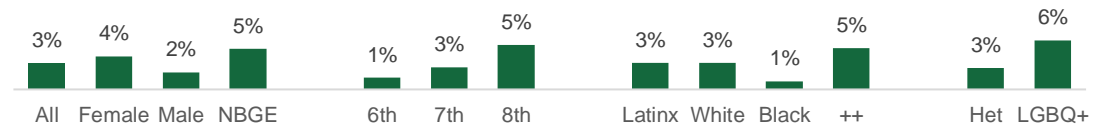
Perception of risk: Most middle school students (79.4%) believe it is risky to drink five or more drinks of alcohol per week.

Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Drank alcohol at least once, past 30 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial) 29

Middle school

MARIJUANA USE

Use of marijuana has also declined during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marijuana use increases as grades increase and is more common among LGBTQ+ students than heterosexual students.

See charts below.

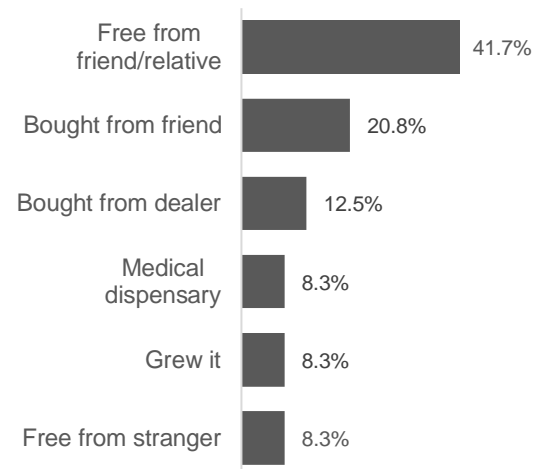
Related findings

Risk perception: 71.2% of students believe students risk harming themselves if they smoke marijuana once or twice a week.

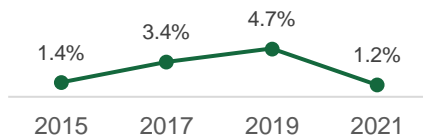
Peer disapproval: 64.3% of students think their friends would find it very wrong to smoke marijuana or consume marijuana products.

Marijuana access: 6.2% of students find it easy to obtain marijuana. Half of all middle schoolers find it impossible

How students get marijuana products (past 30 days) (n=24)

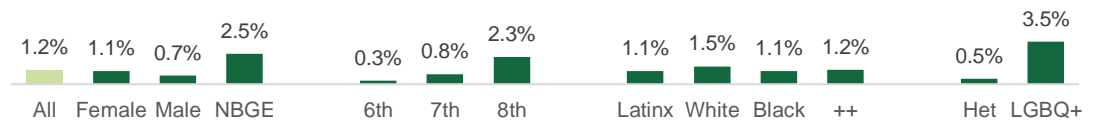


Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Used marijuana at least once, past 30 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)³⁰

Middle school

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Illegal drug use among students at the middle schools has declined.

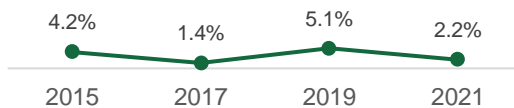
Use of inhalants has decreased the most. Inhalants were the most commonly used illegal drug in 2019; however, this has declined to 2.2% in 2021.

Misuse of prescription pain medication has decreased as well.

Used an illegal substance (past 30 days)

	2019	2021	Trend
Inhalants	5.1%	2.2%	↓
Rx pain medication	3.2%	1.6%	↓
Rx stimulants	2.7%	1.4%	↓
Steroids	2.4%	1.4%	↓
Heroin	1.9%	1.0%	↓
Cocaine	1.5%	1.1%	↓

Trend in lifetime use of inhalants



PERSONAL SAFETY

VIOLENCE-RELATED
BEHAVIOR

BULLYING

Middle school

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIOR

One out of five students have carried a weapon in their lifetime.

NBGE students are more likely to have carried a weapon in their lifetime compare to male and female students.

White students are more likely to have experience carrying a weapon compared to other students.

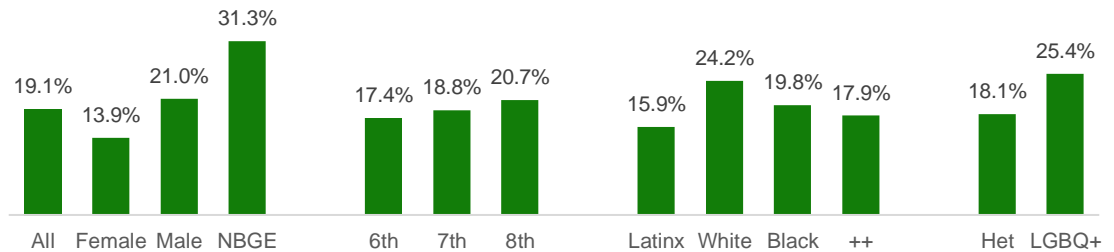
See charts below.

Related findings

Involved in a fight: 37.2% have ever been in a physical fight. Male and NBGE students (49.4% and 45.8%) are more likely to have been involved in a physical fight compared to female students (20.2%). Half of students who identify as Black (53.1%) have been involved in a fight in their lifetime compared to White, Latinx, and Multiracial students (35.2%, 35.3%, and 37.3%, respectively).

Access to a gun: 3.4% of students have access to a gun.

Students who've carried a weapon, lifetime



Middle school

BULLYING

22% were bullied in the past year.

NGBE and LGBTQ+ students are more likely to experience bullying than their peers. Fewer white students experience bullying compared to students of color.

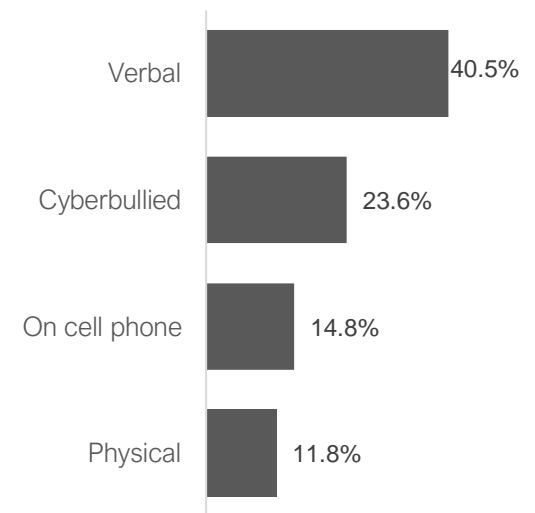
The most common form of bullying is verbal, followed by cyberbullying. See chart on right.

Related findings

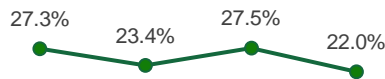
Negative remarks: 43.9% heard negative or derogatory remarks about LGBTQ people and 38.2% about racial, ethnic, immigrant, and/or religious groups during the past 30 days.

Who students tell about being bullied: 23% of students who were bullied have not told anyone. Most who are bullied tell their parents (37.5%). Some also tell a friend (24.4%) or sibling (14.2%).

Forms of bullying experienced, past year



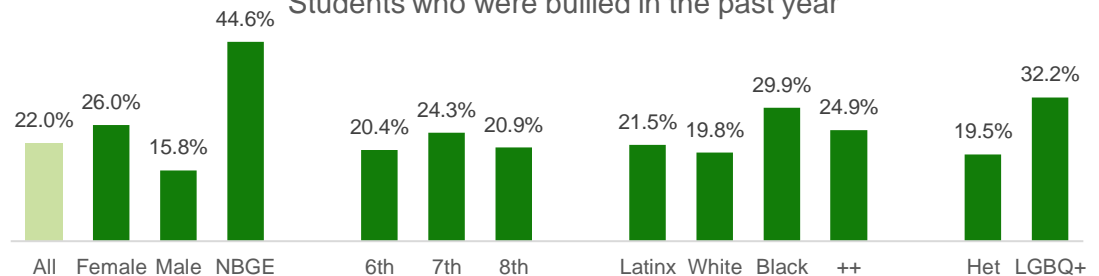
Trend



2015 2017 2019 2021

Waltham Middle School YRBS (2019)

Students who were bullied in the past year



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)³⁴

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

STRESS

DEPRESSION & SUICIDE

EATING & BODY IMAGE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Middle school

STRESS

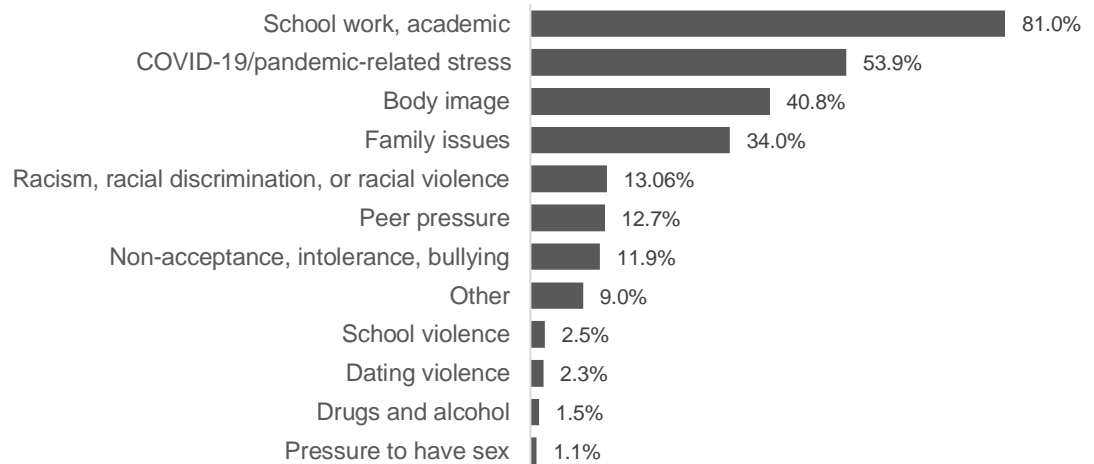
One quarter of students frequently experienced overwhelming stress, increasing from 2019 (22.8%).

More than half of non-binary/gender expansive students experienced overwhelming stress in the past year, and females are more than twice as likely than males to experience frequent overwhelming stress.

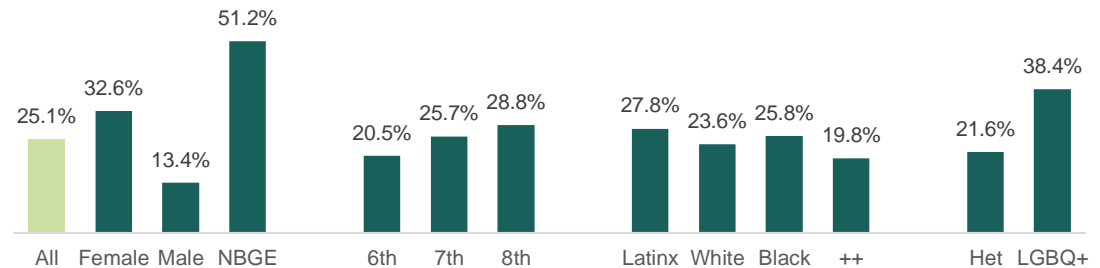
Stress is more common among LGBTQ+ students than straight students.

See charts below.

Causes of stress
(n=1,103)



Frequently experienced overwhelming stress, in past year



Middle school

DEPRESSION and SUICIDE

One in three respondents experienced depression in the past year.

NGBE, female, and LGBTQ+ students most likely to experience depression. Latinx students are also more likely to experience depression compared to their peers.

See charts below.

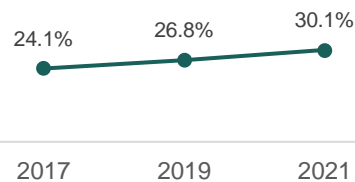
Related findings

Suicide ideation is high: 26% (287 students) have seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months (compared to 22.7% at the high school).

Females are more likely than males to consider (31.0% vs. 15.6%) and attempt (8.5% vs. 3.0%) suicide.

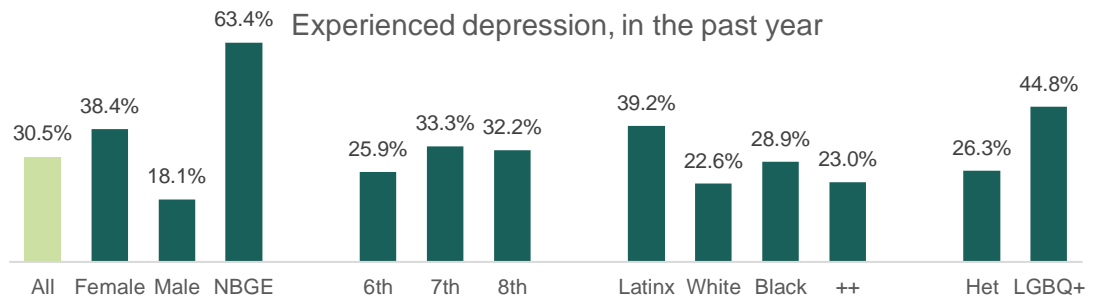
Non-binary/gender expansive and LGBTQ+ students are more likely to consider and attempt suicide or self-harm than cisgender and straight students.

Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Experienced depression, in the past year



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)³⁷

Middle school

EATING and BODY IMAGE

39.8% of all respondents ate breakfast everyday for the past 7 days.

LGBQ+ and NGBE students are the most likely to skip a day of breakfast.

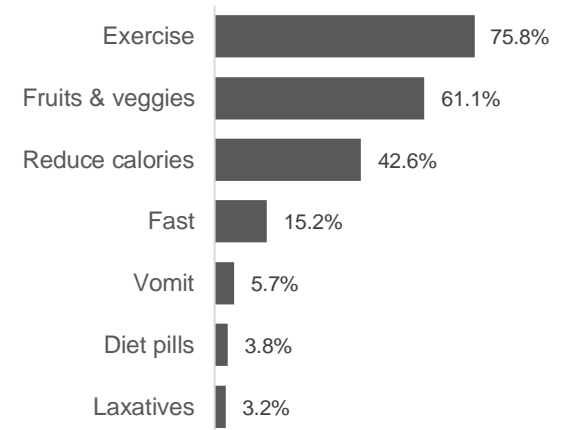
The most common reasons for given for skipping breakfast were "No time to eat" (26%) and "Not hungry" (34.1%).

Related findings

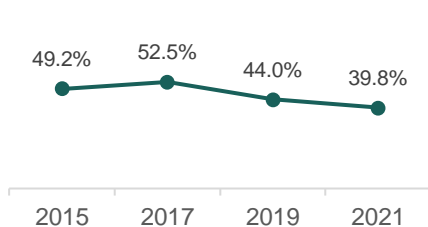
Body image: 41.3% of respondents feel they are overweight, 15.6% feel they are underweight, and 43.1% feel they are about the right weight.

Weight control techniques: The most common technique to lose weight is exercise followed by increasing intake of fruits and veggies.

Weight control techniques, past 30 days

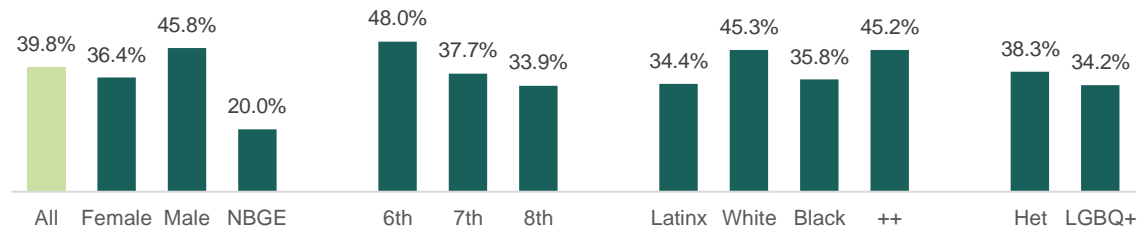


Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Ate breakfast every day for the past 7 days



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)38

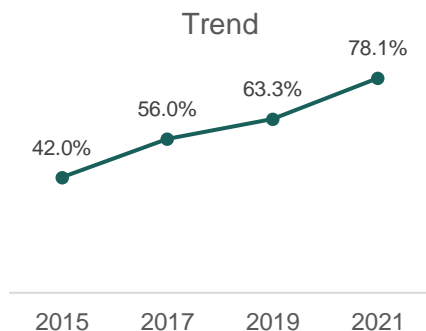
Middle school

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and SLEEP

78.1% spend 3+ hours in front of a screen for non-school-related activities on an average school day.

Screens include TVs, computers, phones, and other handheld devices.

Overall, students are spending more time on their phones compared to previous years. See charts below.



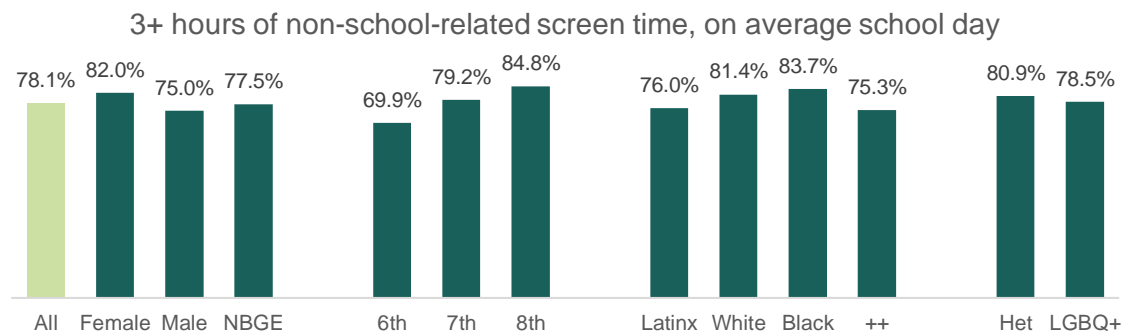
Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Related findings

Exercise: 78.6% exercise regularly* compared to 70.9% from 2019. 7.3% did not exercise in the 7 days prior to taking the survey.

*Exercise regularly is considered as exercising three or more times a week.

Sleep: The majority of respondents sleep for 7 or more hours on an average school night (75.8%).



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)³⁹

Middle school

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

4.4% have had sexual intercourse in their lifetimes and 7.5% have ever had sexual contact.

NBGE and LGBTQ+ students are more likely to have had sexual intercourse than cisgender/straight students, and the percentage of students who have had sexual intercourse doubles from 7th to 8th grade. Sexual activity is highest among Latinx students compared to their peers.

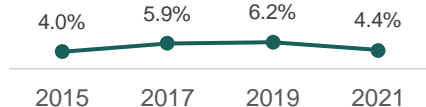
Related findings

Sexual partners: 44.4% have had sexual intercourse with one partner in their lifetime (of students who have *ever* had sexual intercourse, n=54). Males are more likely than females to have had 4 or more partners in their lifetime (26% and 4.8%, respectively).

Condom use: 54.8% said they or their partner used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse (of students who have *ever* had sexual intercourse, n=54). Males are more likely to say they used a condom than females (73.9% and 33.3%, respectively).

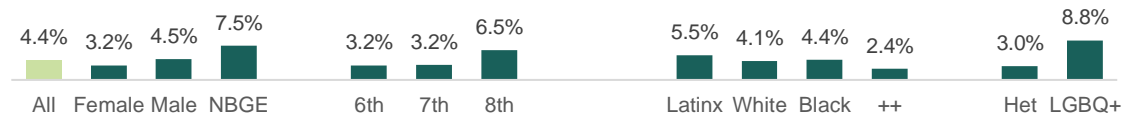
Sex education: 18.0% say they have been taught about HIV or AIDS in school and 20.1% say they have been taught about STIs. 68.4% have *not* had conversations with parents or other adult relatives about sexuality or safe sex in the past year.

Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2019)

Ever had sexual intercourse



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)⁴⁰

ASSETS & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

VOLUNTEERING,
SPORTS, & ACTIVITIES

TRUSTED ADULTS

Middle school

VOLUNTEERING, SPORTS, & ACTIVITIES

57.4% participate in extracurricular activities

Participation in organized extracurricular activities is highest among white students. Females are more likely to participate in organized extracurricular activities than males and non-binary/gender expansive students.

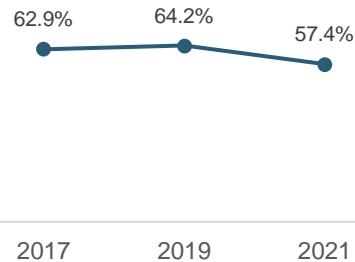
See charts below.

Related findings

Volunteering: 35.5% of respondents volunteer for 1-4 hours on an average month.

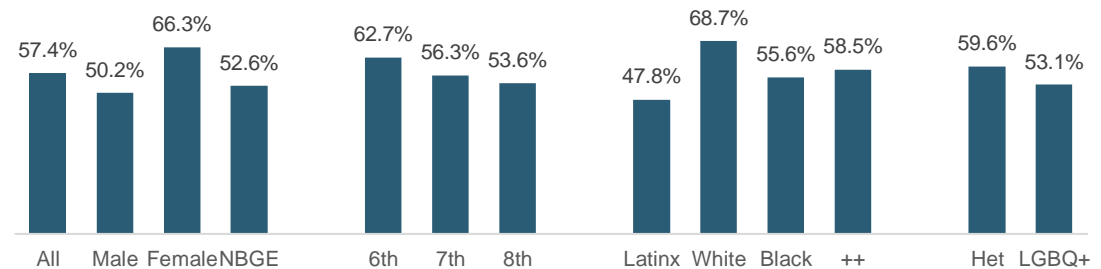
School sports: 52.5% play on at least one school sports team, with males more likely to play on a school sports team than females (57.7% and 49.3%, respectively). Fewer Latinx students participate in school sports (35.4%) compared to white and multiracial students (68.3% and 61.7%, respectively).

Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Participated in organized extracurricular activities, past week



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)⁴²

Middle school

TRUSTED ADULTS

56.4% have a trusted adult at school they can talk to if they have a problem.

White students are more likely to have trusted adults at school than Latinx and other students of color.

See charts below.

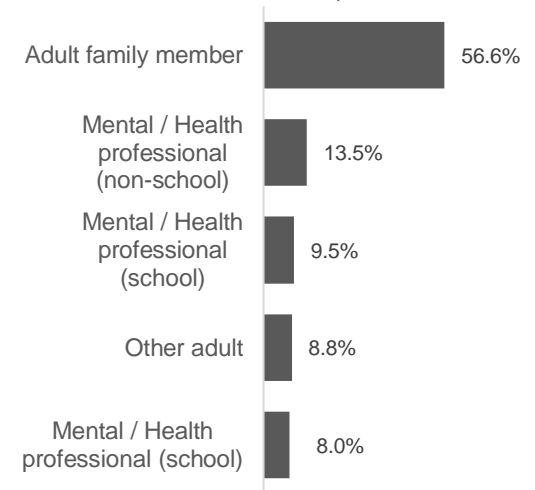
Related findings

Trusted adults outside of school:

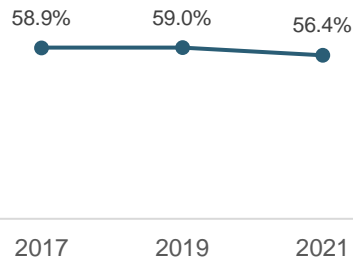
80.3% have a trusted adult outside of school. Of these, 79.3% have a trusted parent or other adult family member, 1.6% have a trusted non-family adult (e.g., religious leader, club advisor, neighbor), and 19.0% have both.

38% have *needed* to talk to an adult and 50.3% have talked to an adult in the past year about how they were feeling or about a problem.

Which adults did you talk to about problems? (in past 12 months)

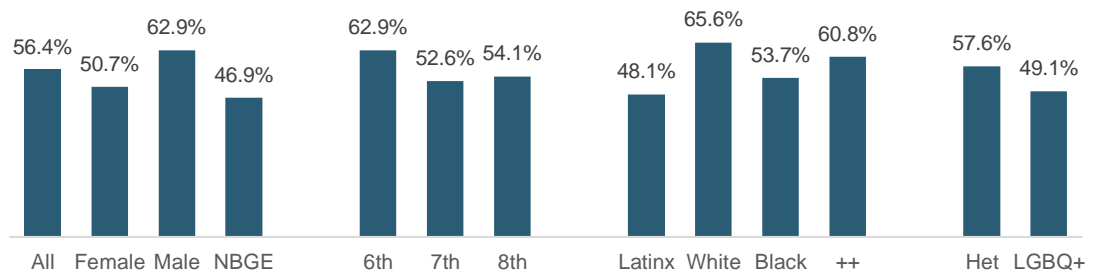


Trend



Waltham Middle School YRBS (2021)

Have a trusted adult at school



++ Another race/ethnicity (incl. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial)⁴³

ANNEX A. METHODOLOGY

SURVEY PROCESS AND RESPONSE

The YRBS is administered during the spring semester to all students (i.e. census sampling) on a date and class period designated by each school. The survey is administered by teachers with support from school administrators and the Waltham Partnership for Youth.

Completion of the survey is voluntary and anonymous. Parents are informed of the survey in advance and given the option to opt out.

In 2021, all students took the survey online through a link provided by their teacher under test administration protocol. Since the 2021 survey was administered during the COVID-19 pandemic, students took the survey in the school classroom or from their homes during remote learning(WSO students).

Annex A. Methodology

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Waltham's YRBS instruments are adapted from the 2019 CDC and 2017 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.

In 2021, the Waltham Partnership for Youth Coalition review and recommend changes to both high school and middle school instruments.

The 2021 High School YRBS instrument contains 94 questions (5 fewer than the 2019 instrument).

The 2021 Middle School YRBS instrument contains 78 questions (4 fewer than the 2019 instrument).

ANNEX B. ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

High school students (n=678)

Race/ethnicity

38%	Hispanic/Latino+	Latinx	39%
0.4%	Other race/ethnicity		
	White/Caucasian	White	38%
5%	Asian	++ Another race	11%
3%	Middle Eastern+		
2%	Mixed race/ethnicity		
0.7%	American Indian/Alaska Native+		
7%	Black/African American +	Black	11%
4%	Haitian Creole		
		Unknown	1%

Gender Identity

Female

Cisgender female 48.23%
Transgender female 0.29%

49%

Male

Cisgender male 44.84%
Transgender male 0.29%

45%

NBGE*

Gender Expansive 4%
Questioning 1%

5%

Unknown

1%

Sexual Orientation

Straight/Heterosexual

70%

LGBQ+

Bisexual or Pansexual+ 11%
Gay/Lesbian 3%
Queer 0.74%
An orientation not listed 0.4%
Asexual 3%
I do not know 5%

23%

Blank

7%

*NBGE: Non-binary + gender expansive + questioning

Waltham High School YRBS 2021

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

Middle school students (n=1103)

Race/ethnicity

41%	Hispanic/Latino+	Latinx	43%
2%	Other race/ethnicity		
White/Caucasian		White	31%
6%	Mixed race/ethnicity	++ Another race	15%
5%	Asian		
3%	American Indian or Alaska Native+		
1%	Middle Eastern+		
5%	Black/African American +	Black	9%
4%	Haitian Creole		
0.1%	A race/ethnicity not listed here		
Unknown			2%

Gender Identity

Male	Cisgender male 48%	49%
	Transgender male 0.45%	
Female	Cisgender female 40%	41%
	Transgender female 1%	
NBGE	Gender Expansive 4%	8%
	Questioning 4%	
Unknown		2%

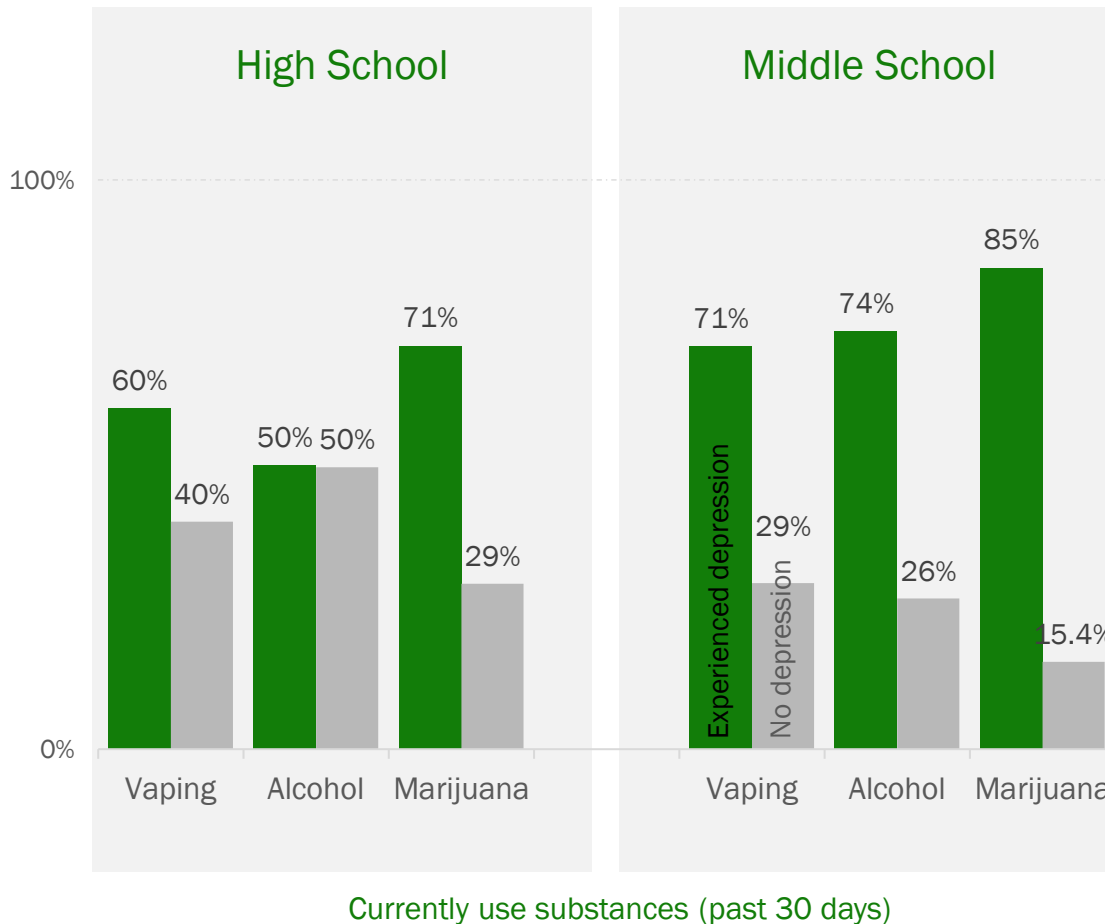
Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual		61%
LGBQ+	Bisexual or Pansexual+ 11%	26%
	Gay/Lesbian 2%	
	Queer 0.45%	
	An orientation not listed here 1%	
	Asexual 2%	
	I do not know 10%	13%
Blank		

*NBGE: Non-binary + gender expansive + questioning

ANNEX C. A DEEPER DIVE INTO RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

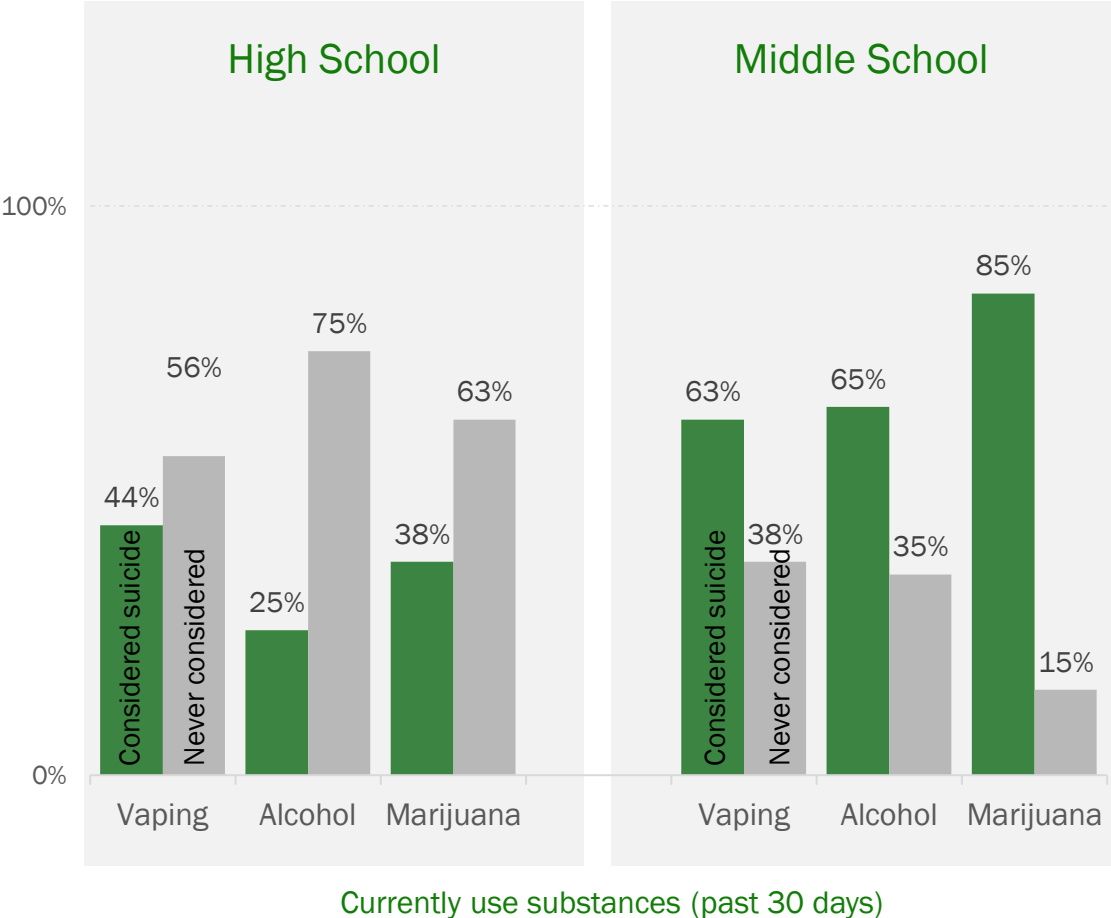
Depression among students who use substances



Students who **use marijuana** or **vape** are also likely to experience depression

At the middle schools, students who **use substances** also tend to experience depression

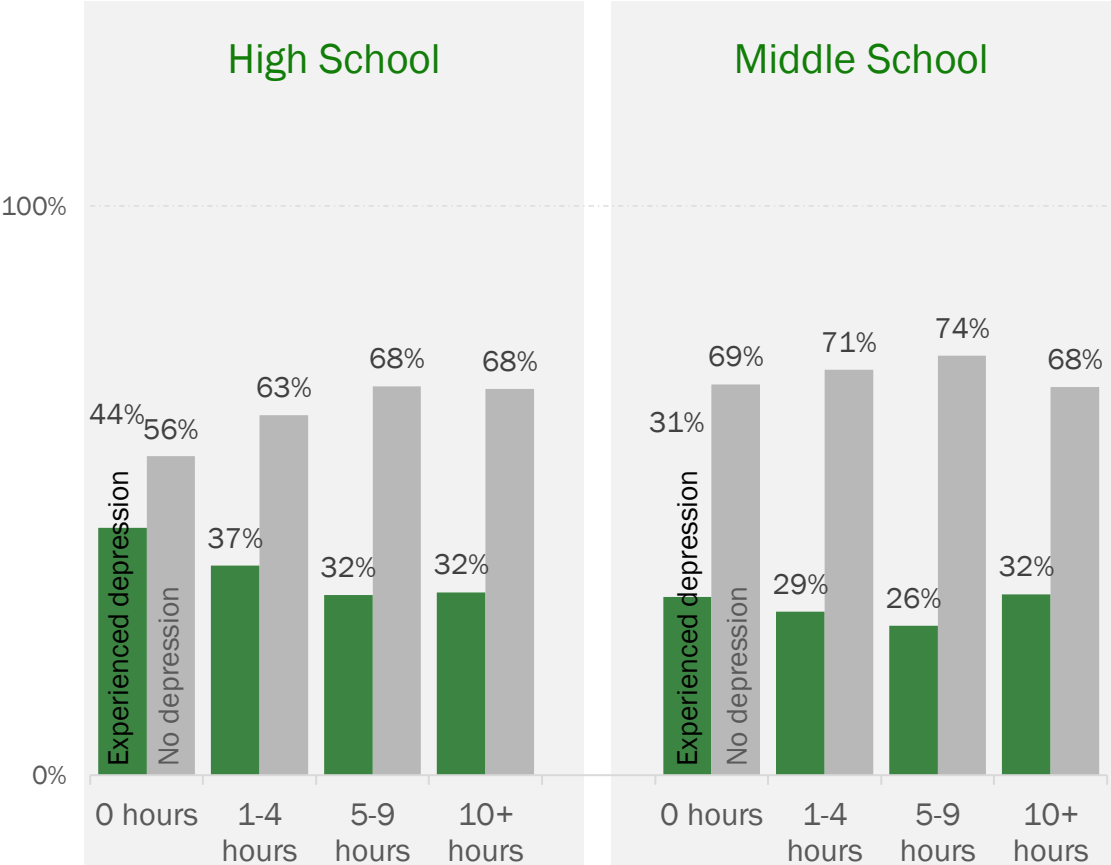
Suicide ideation among students who use substances



At the high school, students who use substances are **less likely** to have considered suicide.

However, this pattern is **reversed** at the middle school level.

Depression among students who did volunteer work

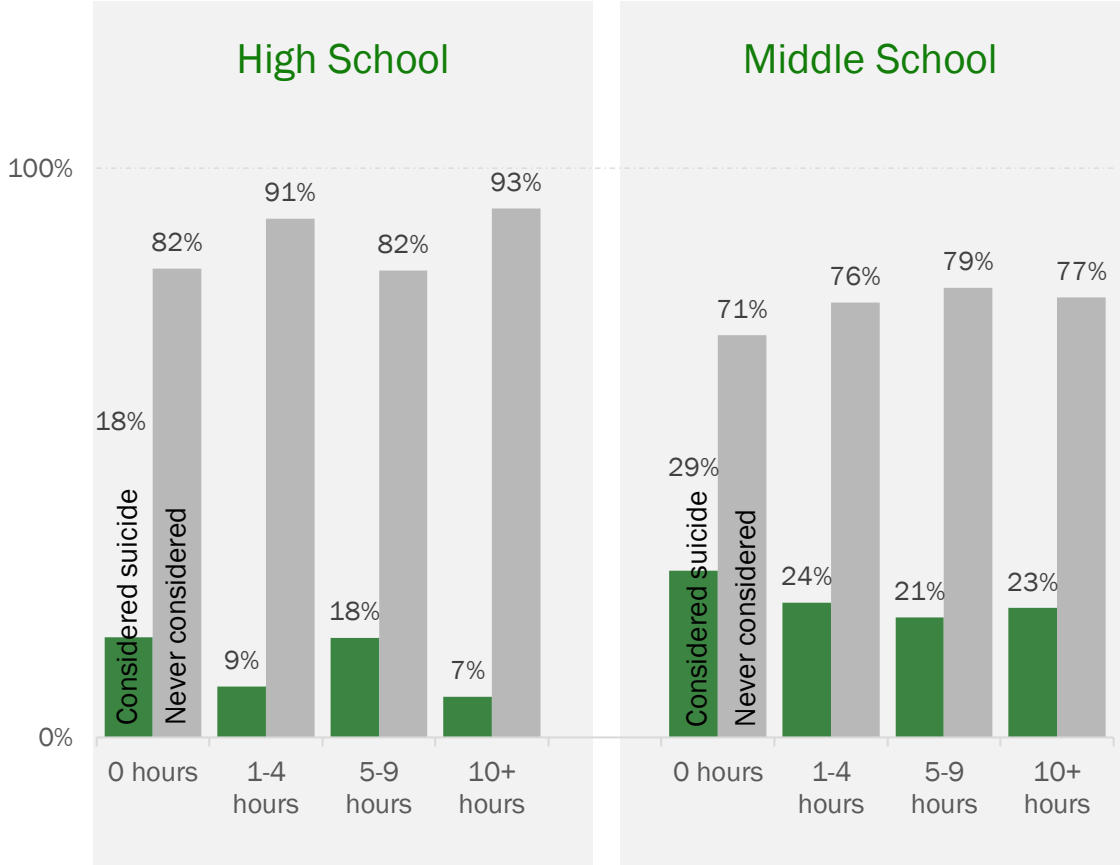


Hours spent volunteering in an average month

Students who volunteer are **less likely** to experience depression.

As the number of volunteer hours increases, the likelihood of experiencing depression decreases.

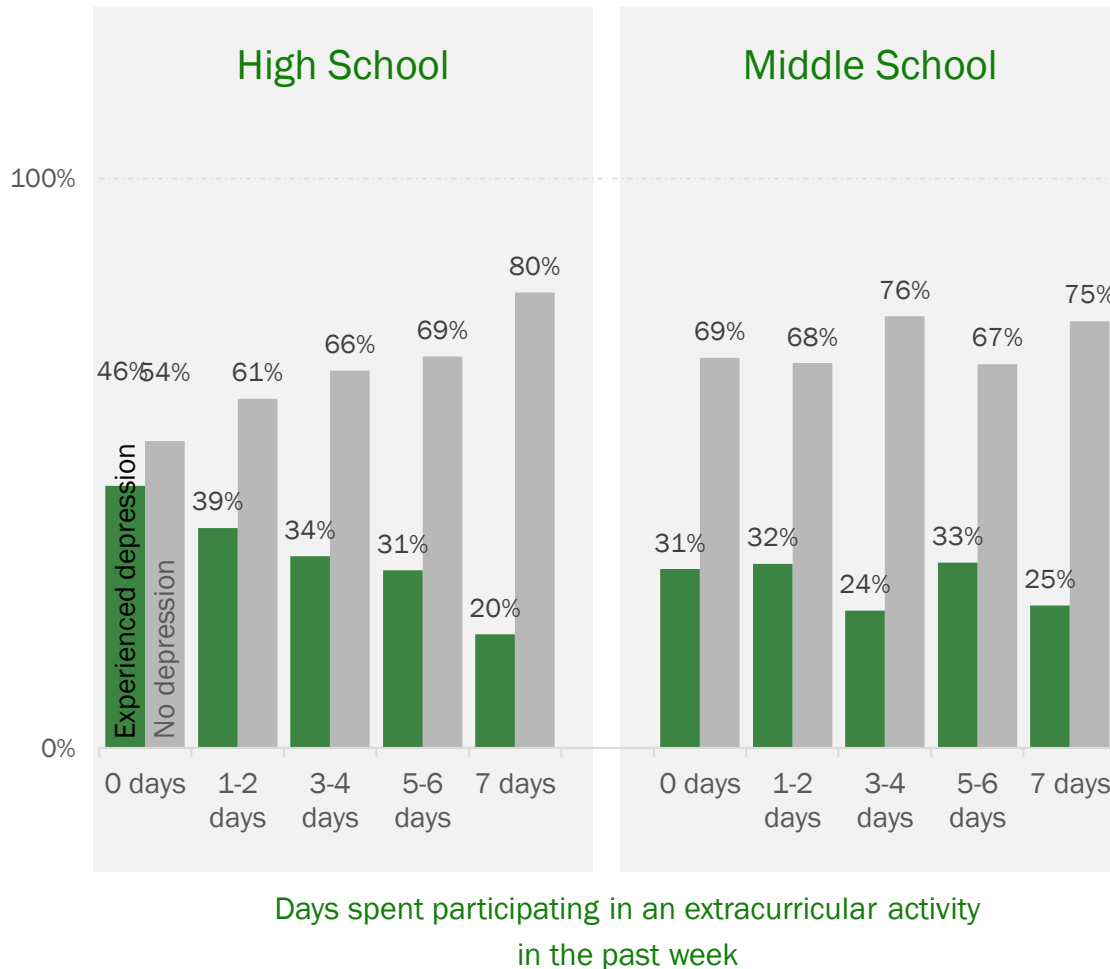
Suicide ideation among students who did volunteer work



Hours spent volunteering in an average month

Students who volunteer are **less likely** to have considered suicide

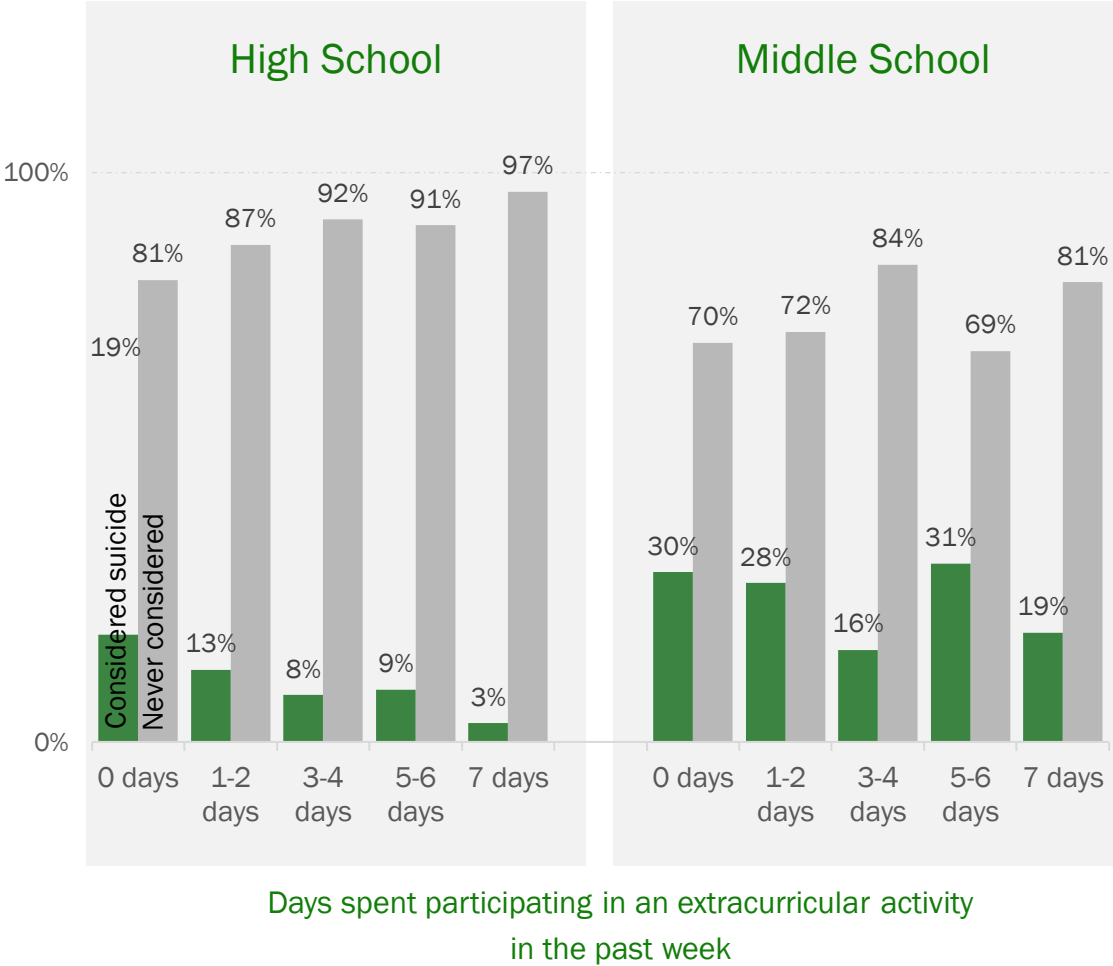
Depression among students who participate in **extra curricular activities**



Students who participate in extracurricular activities are **less likely** to experience depression

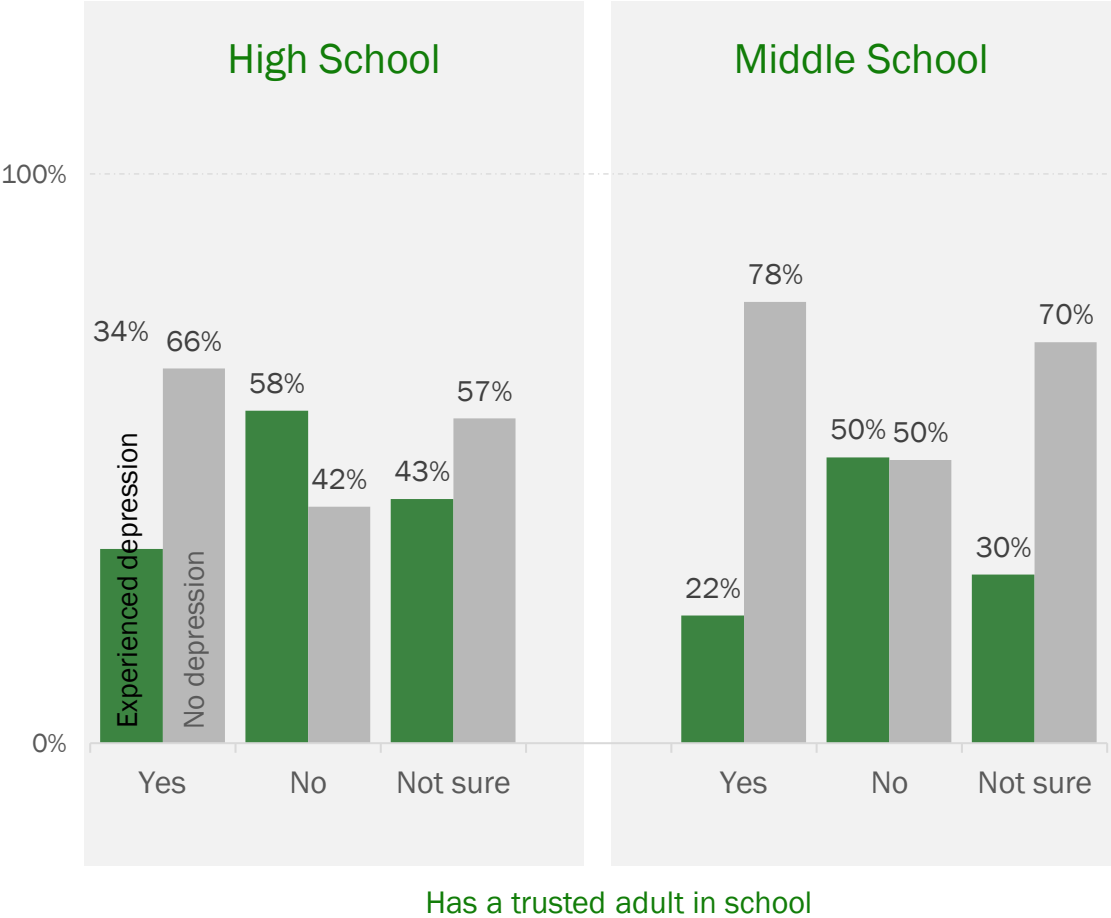
At the **high school**, depression decreases as the number of extracurricular hours increases.

Suicide ideation among students who participate in **extra curriculum activities**



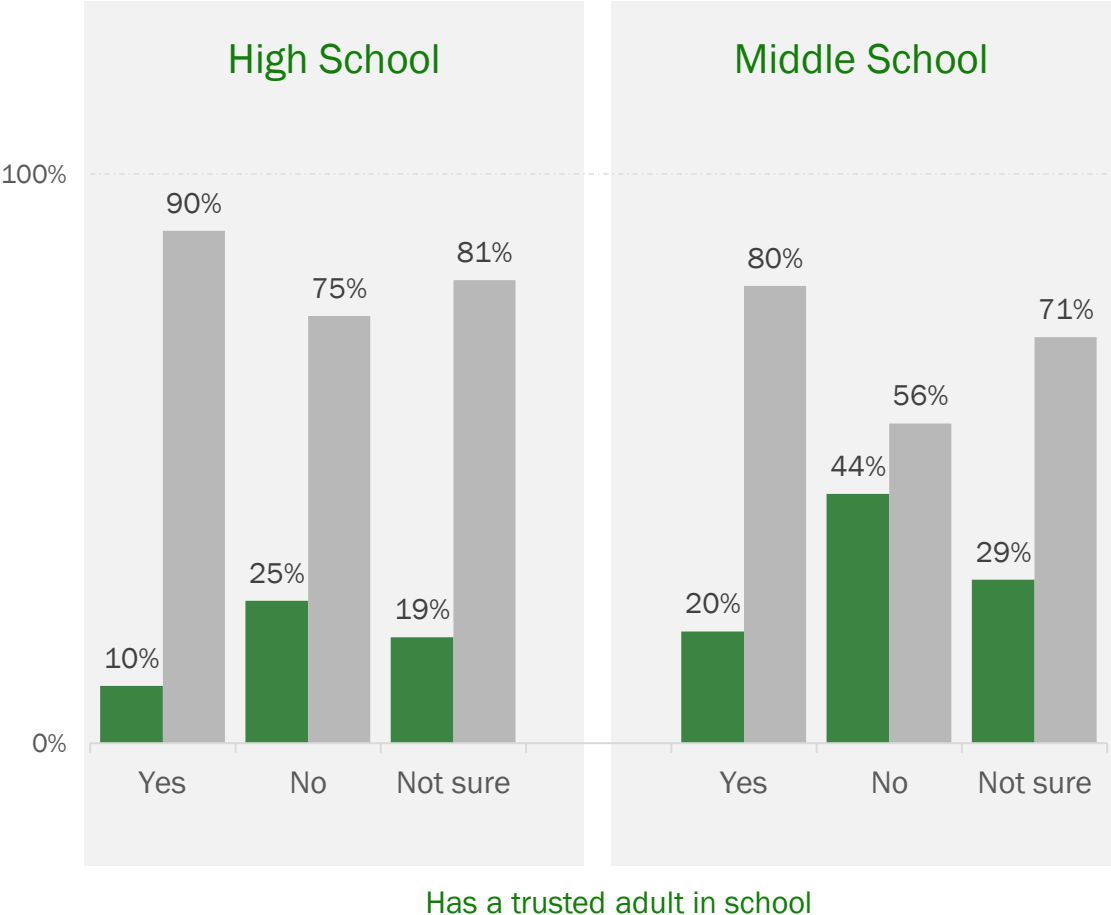
Students who participate in extracurricular activities are **less likely** to have considered suicide.

Depression among students who have a trusted adult in school



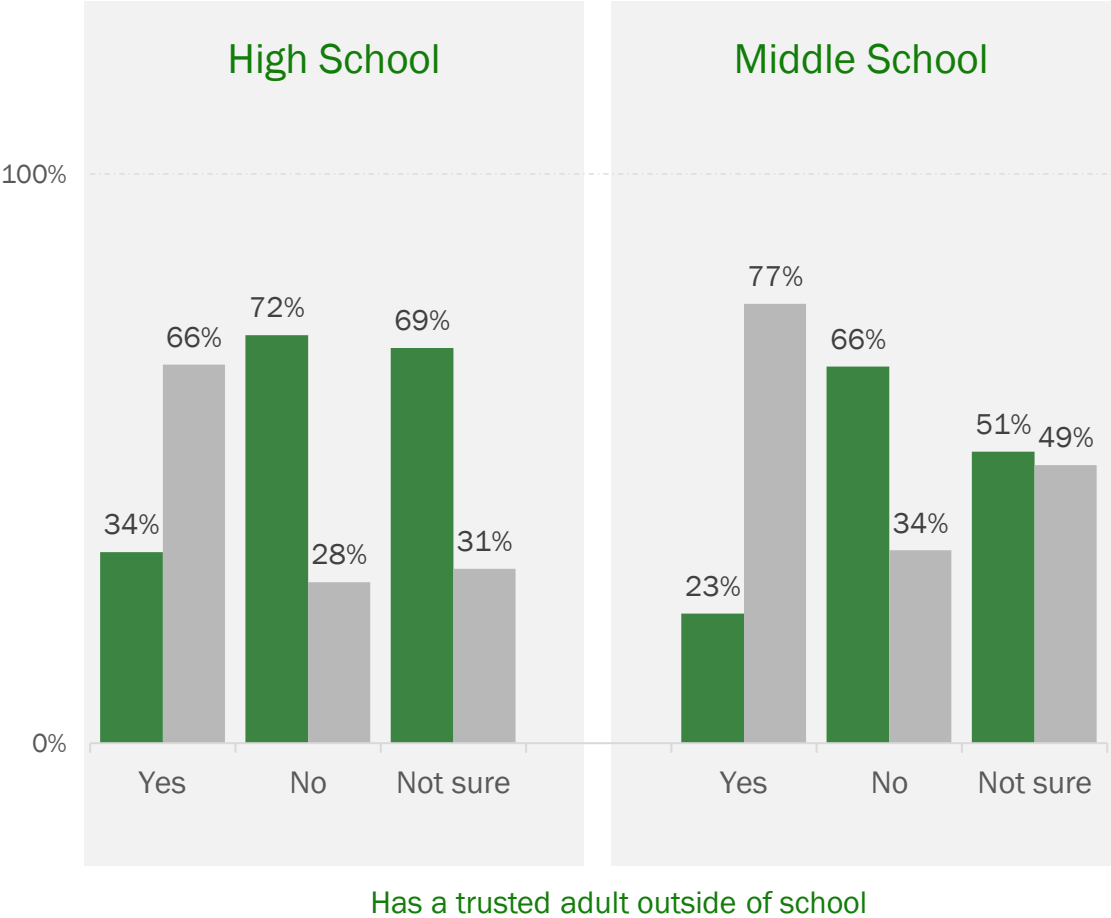
Students who have a trusted adult at school are **less likely** to have **experienced depression** than students who do not have a trusted adult at school.

Suicide ideation among students who have a **trusted adult in school**



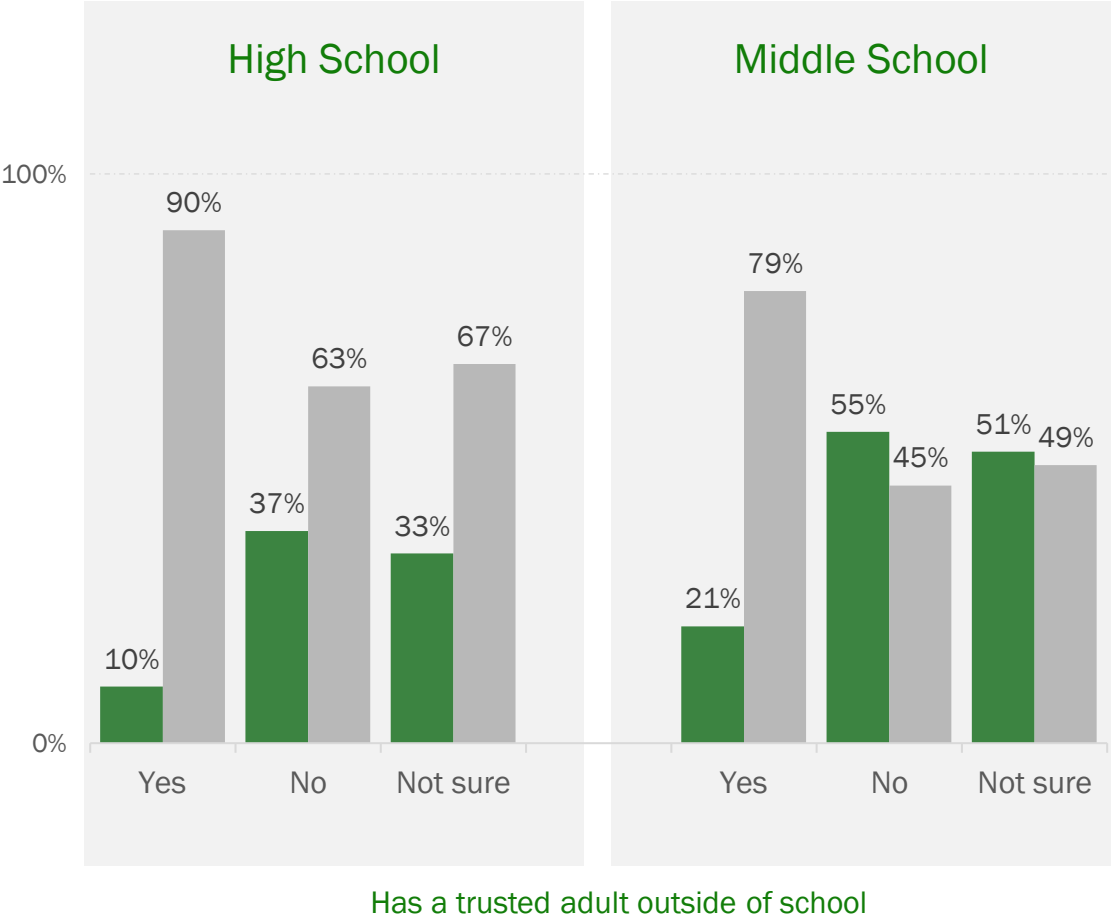
Students who have a trusted adult at school are **less likely** to have **considered suicide** than students who do not have a trusted adult at school.

Depression among students who have a trusted adult outside school



Students who have a trusted adult **outside of school** are **also less likely to have experienced depression** than students who do not have a trusted adult outside of school.

Suicide ideation among students who have a **trusted adult outside school**



Students who have a trusted adult **outside of school** are **also less likely** to have **considered suicide** than students who do not have a trusted adult outside of school.