

**REPORT ON**  
**THE 2016 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**  
**FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, AND 12**  
**FOR THE**  
**HARVARD SCHOOLS**

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**BACKGROUND AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In 1997, Ms. Leslie Luppold, the Senior Vice-President of Operations for Emerson Hospital, reached out to several school districts from the hospital's service area to attempt to determine areas of common interest and concern. A number of discussions ensued and through this process, Emerson Hospital and the Health Education Coordinators from the four school districts which

responded, decided to collaborate on the development and implementation of the first joint Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Project in 1998.

Using an instrument based on the YRBS from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, students from grades 6, 8, and 11 were surveyed and the responses to those surveys were tabulated and analyzed. Much information of value to Emerson Hospital, the four school districts (the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools, the Littleton Public Schools, and the Westford Public Schools), as well as their respective communities, important to program planning and curriculum development, was gathered and shared broadly.

This effort was undertaken for a second time (including three additional school districts: the Boxborough Public Schools, the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools, and the Maynard Public Schools) in the year 2000. Because of the success of the first two projects, it was decided to undertake this effort in 2002 and every other year thereafter in the hopes of developing up-to-date, reliable data on youth risk behavior. Also, beginning with the survey of 2000, the scope was expanded to include all students from grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

In 2011 Emerson Hospital and the seven school districts were pleased to welcome two additional districts (the Harvard Public Schools and the Nashoba Regional Schools) who had decided to join in this important project. In 2014 the Boxborough Public Schools merged with the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Public Schools to form one unified school district. With the support and encouragement of administration from Emerson Hospital and each school district, a committee comprised of representatives from Emerson Hospital and Health Education Coordinators from the now eight area school districts, met and worked for several months to update and refine the YRBS and the process for its implementation and analysis.

The members of this committee included: Ms. Bonnie Kaplan-Goldsmith from Emerson Hospital; Ms. Marilyn Bisbicos from the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools; Ms. Kristen Herbert from the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools; Ms. Ann Russo from the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools; Mr. Drew Skrocki from the Harvard Public Schools; Ms. Maureen McMahon and Ms. Sarah Dorfman from the Littleton Public Schools; Ms. Lisa MacLean from the Maynard Public Schools; Ms. Donna Linstrom from the Nashoba Regional Schools; Mr. Sean O'Leary from the Westford Public Schools; Ms. Elizabeth Denny from Market Street Research; and Mr. James Byrne from Northeast Health Resources. It is because of their continuing commitment and collaboration that this project and report are a reality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Through the support and assistance of Emerson Hospital, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was implemented with students in grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in eight school districts including the Harvard Schools, during March of 2016. These surveys were primarily based on those developed specifically for middle school and high school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, stress, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use, gambling, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, dietary behavior, and physical activity. Emerson Hospital and the eight school districts contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to assist in the design of the instrument and to carry out the tabulation and an analysis of the data gathered from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Every other year, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education carries out a Youth Risk Behavior Survey for high school students from a cross-section of school systems in the state. The most recent of these surveys for which data is currently available was carried out during the Spring of 2015 and was administered to students from randomly selected public school systems. A comparison with certain of the data from the results of that survey will also be provided. No such YRBS for middle school students is carried out on a state-wide basis.

The data gathered from the surveys in each of the school districts, was tabulated individually and then combined to form an aggregate database. The eight school districts included in this aggregate are the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools, the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools, the Harvard Public Schools, the Littleton Public Schools, the Maynard Public Schools, the Nashoba Regional Schools, and the Westford Public Schools. As part of the following analysis, a comparison with certain of the data from the results of that aggregate will also be provided.

After much consideration and planning (and being piloted in 2010 and 2012) the grade 6 and grade 8 surveys were carried out on a web-enabled basis in all of the eight school districts. The surveys themselves were identical in all ways to the traditional paper and pencil surveys except that they were carried out online.

## SURVEY PROCESS

In the Harvard Schools it was agreed that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey would be distributed to all students in grades 6, 8, and 9 through 12 during March of 2016. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and eight students were exempted at parental request. The survey was administered simultaneously to all students in attendance in the high school on March 10, 2016. The grade 6 and grade 8 surveys were carried out online simultaneously in each of the three middle schools on March 10, and then re-administered due to technical issues on April 1, and April 4, 2016. In each school the survey was administered by professional staff from the school district. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of **179** students who responded to the middle school survey: **91** from grade 6 (females – **47**, males – **43**, transgender - **1**), and **88** from grade 8 (females – **48**, males – **40**).

There were a total of **368** students who responded to the high school survey: 102 from grade 9, **93** from grade 10, **93** from grade 11, and **78** from grade 12. There were **168** females, **192** males, and **4** transgender students who responded to the survey. **4** students did not indicate their gender, and **2** students did not indicate their grade.

Of the **612** students enrolled in grade 6, grade 8, and grades 9 through 12 on the date of administration, **547** participated in the survey. This constitutes a participation rate of 90% (grade 6: 93%, grade 8: 94%; and high school: 88%).

## 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 whole percent, and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Aggregate of Respondents  
From Eight School Districts  
2016 YRBS Student Sample**

**Grade and Gender**

**Grade 6:** 1,771 Respondents

Females	52.1%
Males	47.5%
Transgender	0.3%
Gender not indicated	0.1%

**Grade 8:** 1,764 Respondents

Females	48.6%
Males	49.9%
Transgender	1.1%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

**Grade 9:** 1,931 Respondents

Females	49.1%
Males	49.6%
Transgender	1.0%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

**Grade 10:** 1,810 Respondents

Females	51.0%
Males	47.7%
Transgender	1.0%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

**Grade 11:** 1,770 Respondents

Females	49.6%
Males	49.1%
Transgender	1.0%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

**Grade 12:** 1,694 Respondents

Females	49.0%
Males	49.4%
Transgender	1.4%
Gender not indicated	0.2%

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (CONT'D)

**School District**

**Grade 6:**

Acton - Boxborough	23.9%	423
Concord	12.6%	223
Groton - Dunstable	10.2%	181
Harvard	5.1%	91
Littleton	5.7%	101
Maynard	6.4%	113
Nashoba	15.1%	267
Westford	21.0%	<u>372</u>
		1,771

**Grade 8:**

Acton - Boxborough	23.6%	417
Concord	11.1%	195
Groton - Dunstable	11.2%	197
Harvard	5.0%	88
Littleton	7.0%	124
Maynard	6.0%	106
Nashoba	12.6%	223
Westford	23.5%	<u>414</u>
		1,764

**High School:**

Acton - Boxborough	23.7%	1,716
Concord - Carlisle	16.4%	1,187
Groton - Dunstable	10.3%	744
Harvard	5.1%	368
Littleton	5.2%	377
Maynard	4.5%	326
Nashoba	13.7%	993
Westford	21.2%	<u>1,541</u>
		7,252

## 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 **Harvard** 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 59 questions in grade 6, 89 questions in grade 8, and 113 questions at the high school, 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 data gathered from the implementation of the 2015 Massachusetts High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the eight school district aggregate data. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the **Harvard** Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6 AND 8SAFETY

- **0%** of sixth grade respondents (1% - aggregate) and **3%** of eighth grade respondents (3% - aggregate) **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a seatbelt when riding in a car.** In the eighth grade, male respondents (5%) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt more frequently than females (2%).
- 
- **10%** of sixth grade respondents (9% - aggregate) and **18%** of eighth grade respondents (21% - aggregate) **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** In both grades, males (grade 6 – 14%, grade 8 – 35%) report never or rarely wearing a bicycle helmet more frequently than females (grade 6 – 6%, grade 8 - 4%).
- **2%** of sixth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) and **3%** of eighth grade respondents (4% - aggregate) **report having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by a minor (under age 21) who had been drinking alcohol or using other drugs** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was little variation by gender in either grade.
- **7%** of sixth grade respondents (6% - aggregate) and **6%** of eighth grade respondents (6% - aggregate) **report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors (bullied) from others electronically** during the previous 12 months. In the sixth grade, females (9%) report having been bullied online more frequently than males (5%). In the eighth grade, males (10%) report having been bullied online more frequently than females (2%). Further, **2%** of sixth graders and **3%** of eighth graders **report doing so to someone else.**
- **17%** of all eighth grade respondents (7% - aggregate) **report sending or receiving sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”)** during the previous 12 months (females – **8%**, males – **28%**).
- **17%** (18% - aggregate) among eighth graders **report having looked at pornographic material** on at least one day in the previous 30 days. Male respondents (38%) report doing so much more frequently than females (0%).

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **8%** of sixth grade respondents (6% - aggregate) and **10%** of eighth grade respondents (10% - aggregate) **report having carried any type of weapon such as a gun, knife or club** during the thirty days prior to the survey. In both grades male respondents (grade 6 – 12%, grade 8 – 23%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (grade 6 – 4%, grade 8 – 0%). **0%** of sixth grade respondents and **1%** of eighth grade respondents **report having done so on school property during the school day**.
- **9%** of sixth grade respondents (10% - aggregate) and **11%** of eighth graders (10% - aggregate) **report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors from others (bullied) in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey. (grade 6: females – 9%, males – 9%; grade 8: females – 15%, males – 8%). Among all respondents, **2%** (2% - aggregate) of 6<sup>th</sup> graders and **3%** (2% - aggregate) of 8<sup>th</sup> graders **report having done so to someone else**.
- **5%** of eighth grade respondents (7% - aggregate) **report having received unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature which made them uncomfortable (sexual harassment) from others in school** during the 12 months prior to the survey (females – 4%, males – 5%).
- **1%** of eighth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) **report having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with**, and **1%** (1% - aggregate) **report having ever done so to someone else**.
- **6%** of eighth grade respondents (8% - aggregate) **report having been shouted at, sworn at, scared, threatened, or insulted by someone they were dating or going out with** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. Males (10%) report this experience most frequently (females – 2%). Further, **3%** of all respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having done so to someone else**.
- **10%** of eighth grade respondents (11% - aggregate) **report having hurt themselves on purpose (for example by cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose)** on at least one occasion during the previous twelve months. The incidence of this behavior was higher among female respondents (females – 17%, males – 3%).

STRESS

- **26%** of sixth grade respondents (30% - aggregate) and **42%** of eighth graders (43% - aggregate) **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of their academic workload** during the previous twelve months. In eighth grade, females (44%) report this experience more frequently than males (40%).
- **21%** of sixth grade respondents (17% - aggregate) and **24%** of eighth grade respondents (24% - aggregate) **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of events in school** during the previous twelve months. In grade 6, females (26%) report this experience more frequently than males (16%).
- When asked to select from a list which **strategies they use most frequently to deal with stress**, the four strategies most frequently reported by respondents were **exercise (grade 6 – 42%, grade 8 – 52%), watching television (grade 6 – 31%, grade 8 – 43%), meditation/relaxation activities (grade 6 – 19%, grade 8 – 17%), and eating (grade 6 – 21%, grade 8 – 34%)**. Of note is that **23%** of sixth graders and **22%** of eighth graders also **report using “other” strategies to deal with stress**.

SUICIDE

- **6%** of sixth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) and **14%** of eighth grade respondents (8% - aggregate) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey (grade 6: females – **6%**, males – **5%**; grade 8: females – **17%**, males – **10%**).
- **2%** of sixth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) and **3%** of eighth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey.

TOBACCO USE

- **1%** of sixth grade respondents (1% - aggregate) and **6%** of eighth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking**. Further, **2%** of eighth graders **report having tried cigarette smoking for the first time before the age of 11**.
- **0%** of sixth grade respondents (0% - aggregate) and **2%** of eighth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion** during the thirty days prior to the survey.
- **3%** of eighth grade respondents (1% - aggregate) **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars** during the thirty days prior to the survey.
- **3%** of sixth grade respondents (1% - aggregate) and **11%** of eighth graders (4% - aggregate) **report having used an electronic cigarette (also called vaping)**, at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey. In the eighth grade, male respondents (23%) report doing so more frequently than females (2%).

ALCOHOL USE

- **4%** of sixth grade respondents (3% - aggregate) and **14%** of eighth grade respondents (11% - aggregate) **report having ever had a drink of alcohol other than for religious reasons** (grade 6: females – **0%**, males – **9%**; grade 8: females – **6%**, males – **23%**). Further, **4%** of sixth graders and **8%** of eighth graders **report having done so for the first time before the age of 12.**
- **2%** of sixth grade respondents (1% - aggregate) and **7%** of eighth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.** In both grades, male respondents (grade 6 – 5%, grade 8 – 10%) report doing so more frequently than females (grade 6 – 0%, grade 8 – 4%).
- **11%** of eighth grade respondents (4% - aggregate) **report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens is allowed,** either occasionally or frequently during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was no variation by gender.
- **When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 34% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so.** In fact, **7%** of all eighth grade respondents actually **report having used alcohol during the previous month.**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **2%** of sixth grade respondent (1% - aggregate) and **8%** of eighth grade respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having ever used marijuana** (grade 8: females – **2%**, males – **15%**). Further, **2%** of eighth graders report having ever used some form of synthetic marijuana such as “Spice”, or “K2”, or in some edible form (females – **0%**, males – **5%**).
- **1%** of sixth grade respondents (0% - aggregate) and **7%** of eighth grade respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey.**
- **When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 10% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, 7% of all eighth grade respondents actually report having used marijuana during the previous month.**
- **0%** of sixth grade respondents (4% - aggregate) and **5%** of eighth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having ever sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high** (grade 6: females – **0%**, males – **0%**; grade 8: females – **0%**, males – **10%**).
- **4%** of sixth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) and **6%** of eighth graders (6% - aggregate) **report having ever used any prescription medication that was not prescribed for them specifically by a doctor.** In the sixth grade, male respondents (7%) report doing so more frequently than females (2%).
- **3%** of eighth graders (2% - aggregate) **report having ever used a prescription opiate medication that was not prescribed by a doctor specifically for them.**
- **1%** of sixth grade respondents (0.3% - aggregate) and **3%** of eighth grade respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property** during the twelve months prior to the survey.

GAMBLING

- **8%** of sixth grade respondents (9% - aggregate) and **10%** of eighth grade respondents (16% - aggregate) **report having gambled by betting on the lottery, Keno, sporting events, casino games, cards, or racing** at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. Male respondents in both grades (grade 6 – 14%, grade 8 – 20%) report this behavior more frequently than females grades (grade 6 – 2%, grade 8 – 2%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **12%** of sixth grade respondents (13% - aggregate) and **48%** of eighth grade respondents (35% - aggregate) **report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family** (grade 6: females – 11%, males – 14%; grade 8: females – 44%, males – 54%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **5%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever had sexual intercourse** compared to 4% from the eight district aggregate (females – 0%, males – 10%). Further, **3%** of the eighth grade respondents (2% - aggregate) **report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 12.**
- **2%** of eighth grade respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having ever had oral sex** (females – 0%, males – 5%).

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- **64%** of sixth grade respondents and **55%** of eighth grade respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight** while many were trying to lose weight (grade 6 – **31%**, grade 8 – **33%**) (aggregate: grade 6 – 27%, grade 8 – 33%) and others were trying to gain weight. In grade 8, female respondents (38%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (28%).
- During the thirty days prior to the survey, **in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:**
  - **56%** of sixth graders (60% - aggregate) and **68%** of eighth graders (59% - aggregate) **report having exercised.**
  - **13%** of sixth graders (21% - aggregate) and **30%** of eighth graders (24% - aggregate) **report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat.**
  - **3%** of sixth graders (2% - aggregate) and **3%** of eighth graders (4% - aggregate) **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more.**
  - **0%** of sixth graders (1% - aggregate) and **1%** of eighth graders (2% - aggregate) **report having vomited or taken laxatives.**
- **8%** of sixth grade respondents (6% - aggregate) and **7%** of eighth graders (11% - aggregate) **report drinking a caffeinated beverage such as coffee, coffee drinks, tea, soda, sports drinks, or drinks like Red Bull** at least once per day on average during the previous seven days (grade 6: females – **6%**, males – **10%**; grade 8: females – **6%**, males – **8%**).
- **21%** of sixth grade respondents (14% - aggregate) and **31%** of eighth grade respondents (25% - aggregate) **report that they ate breakfast on fewer than five days during the week before the survey.** In sixth grade, male respondents report doing so more frequently than females (grade 6: females – 19%, males – 24%). In eighth grade female respondents report doing so more frequently than males (females – 36%, males – 25%).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **84%** of sixth grade respondents (82% - aggregate) and **88%** of eighth grade respondents (80% - aggregate) **report having exercised or participated in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made them sweat or breathe hard on at least three days during the seven days prior to the survey.** In grade 8, males (90%) report such regular exercise more frequently than females (85%), while the reverse was true in grade 6 (females – 87%, males – 81%).
- **2%** of sixth grade respondents (4% - aggregate) and **11%** of eighth grade respondents (11% - aggregate) **report that they spend more than three hours doing homework each day on average.** Female respondents in each grade (grade 6 – 4%, grade 8 – 13%) report doing so more frequently than males (grade 6 – 0%, grade 8 – 10%)
- **12%** of sixth grade respondents (17% - aggregate) and **24%** of eighth grade respondents (38% - aggregate) **report that they spend four hours or more per day on an average school day using computers, television, phones, or other visual technology.** Male respondents in each grade (grade 6 – 15%, grade 8 – 26%) report doing so more frequently than females (grade 6 – 11%, grade 8 – 23%)

HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9, 10, 11, AND 12

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was administered to Harvard High School students in grades 9 through 12 during March of 2016. This report is an overview analysis of certain of the results of that survey. The complete tabulations of student responses to that survey are also available for review.

The following includes comparisons with certain of the data from the 2015 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey as well as the eight district aggregate. It should be noted that some of the questions in this survey were not asked of students in the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

SAFETY

- **3%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else. There was little variation by grade.
- **13%** (12% - aggregate) report having ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by a minor (under age 21) who had been drinking alcohol or using other drugs at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased by grade level (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 11%, grade 11 – 16%, grade 12 – 18%). Male respondents report this experience most frequently (females – 8%, males – 16%).
- **3%** of all respondents (4% - aggregate) (9% - MA YRBS) report having driven a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (females – 1%, males – 4%). By comparison, **9%** (8% - aggregate) report driving a car or other vehicle when they had been using marijuana during the same period of time.
- **22%** of all respondents (23% - aggregate) report having driven a car while using a cell phone to talk without a hands-free option during the previous thirty days. Among those most likely to drive, 43% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and 45% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report having done so. By comparison, **19%** (21% – aggregate) report driving a car while using a cell phone to text, surf the web, or access social media during the same period of time.
- **6%** of all respondents (6% - aggregate) report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors (bullied) from others electronically during the previous 12 months. There was little variance by gender or grade. Further, **4%** of all respondents (3% aggregate) report having done so to someone else.
- **25%** of all respondents (22% - aggregate) report having sent or received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”) during the 12 months prior to the survey (grade 9 – 21%, grade 10 – 20%, grade 11 – 29%, grade 12 – 28%) (females – 21%, males – 26%).
- **43%** of all respondents (40% aggregate) report having looked at pornographic material on at least one day in the previous thirty days. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 30%, grade 10 – 40%, grade 11 – 54%, grade 12 – 48%) and among males (females – 15%, males – 66%).

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **2%** of all respondents (1% - aggregate) **report having carried a gun on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey (females – 1%, males – 3%).
- **3%** of all respondents (2% - aggregate) (3% - 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. Respondents from grade 12 report doing so most frequently (grade 9 – 1%, grade 10 - 3%, grade 11 – 1%, grade 12 – 7%) (females – 1%, males – 4%). Further, **1%** report having done so **during the school day**.
- **4%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) (4% - 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 twelve months prior to the survey (females – 1%, males – 6%).
- **5%** of all respondents (4% - aggregate) **report having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with.** The incidence of this experience was lowest in grades 9 and 11 (grade 9 – 3%, grade 10 – 5%, grade 11 – 3%, grade 12 – 9%) (females – 4%, males – 4%). Among all respondents, **2%** (1% aggregate) **report having ever done so to someone else.**
- **9%** of all respondents (10% - aggregate) **report having been shouted at, sworn at, scared, threatened, or insulted by someone they were dating or going out with** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 9%, grade 11 – 11%, grade 12 – 9%) (females – 10%, males – 8%). Among all respondents, **8%** (8% - aggregate) **report having done so to someone else.**
- **7%** of all respondents (6% - aggregate) **report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors (bullied) from others in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 4%, grade 10 – 5%, grade 11 – 7%, grade 12 – 14%). There was no variation by gender. Further, **3%** (2% - aggregate) **report having done so to someone else.**

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS (CONT'D)

- **12%** of all respondents (10% - aggregate) **report having received unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature which made them uncomfortable (sexual harassment) from others in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience varied by grade (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 15%, grade 11 – 13%, grade 12 – 13%). Females report this experience most frequently (females – 16%, males – 7%).
  
- **14% of all respondents** (14% - aggregate) **report having hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises)** on at least one occasion during the previous twelve months. The incidence of such self-injury was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 13%, grade 10 – 12%, grade 11 – 18%, grade 12 – 13%) and higher among female respondents (females – 19%, males – 9%).

STRESS

- **60%** of all respondents (62% - aggregate) **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of their academic workload** during the previous twelve months. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 46%, grade 10 – 59%, grade 11 – 71%, grade 12 – 64%) and was much higher among females (females – 70%, males – 50%).
- **44%** of all respondents (36% - aggregate) **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of events in school** during the previous twelve months. The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 36%, grade 10 – 38%, grade 11 – 47%, grade 12 – 55%) and was higher among females (females – 53%, males – 34%).
- When asked to select from a list which **strategies they use most frequently to deal with stress**, the four strategies most frequently reported by respondents were **exercise (55%), watching television (35%), eating (35%), and meditation/relaxation activities (21%)**. Of note is that **27%** also report using “other” strategies to deal with stress.

SUICIDE

- **14%** of all respondents (13% - aggregate) (15% - MA YRBS) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 15%, grade 10 – 10%, grade 11 – 13%, grade 12 – 18%). Female respondents (18%) report seriously considering suicide more frequently than males (9%).
- **5%** of all respondents (4% - aggregate) (7% - MA YRBS) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior varied by grade (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 1%, grade 11 – 4%, grade 12 – 6%). There was no variation by gender.

TOBACCO USE

- **16%** of all respondents (13% - aggregate) (28% - MA YRBS) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs.** The incidence of lifetime cigarette smoking increased by grade level (grade 9 – 10%, grade 10 – 14%, grade 11 – 20%, grade 12 – 22%) and was higher among males (females – 8%, males – 22%). Further, **3%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having tried cigarette smoking for the first time before the age of 13.**
- **9%** of all respondents (5% - aggregate) (8% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one day during the thirty days prior to the survey.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 4%, grade 10 – 13%, grade 11 – 13%, grade 12 – 12%) and among males (females – 1%, males – 16%).
- **7%** of all respondents (6% - aggregate) (10% - 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 recent cigar use increased by grade level (grade 9 – 4%, grade 10 – 4%, grade 11 – 9%, grade 12 – 13%). Males (13%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (1%).
- **21%** of all respondents (12% - aggregate) (24% - MA YRBS) **report having used an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), also called vaping, during the previous 30 days.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 11 (grade 9 – 14%, grade 10 – 25%, grade 11 – 28%, grade 12 – 17%) and among males (females – 17%, males – 24%).

ALCOHOL USE

- **56%** of all respondents (52% - aggregate) (61% - MA YRBS) **report having had at least one drink of alcohol (other than for religious reasons) on at least one occasion during their lives** and **8%** (7% - aggregate) (13% - MA YRBS) **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13**. The incidence of lifetime alcohol use increased by grade level (grade 9 – 41%, grade 10 – 54%, grade 11 – 65%, grade 12 – 68%). Male respondents (57%) report ever having a drink of alcohol more frequently than females (54%).
- **29%** of all respondents (29% - aggregate) (34% - 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 increased by grade level (grade 9 – 12%, grade 10 – 27%, grade 11 – 39%, grade 12 – 40%). There was no variation by gender.
- **16%** of all respondents (16% - aggregate) (18% - 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 grades 10 and 12 (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 19%, grade 11 – 18%, grade 12 – 19%) and was slightly higher among females (females – 17%, males – 14%).
- **35%** of all respondents (24% - aggregate) **report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens was allowed, either occasionally or frequently** during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased by grade level (grade 9 – 27%, grade 10 – 33%, grade 11 – 36%, grade 12 – 45%). There was no variation by gender.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used alcohol during the previous month, 21% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so** and another **34%** (total of **55%**) believed that over half had done so. In fact, **29%** of all respondents actually **report having used alcohol during the previous month**.

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **30%** of all respondents (25% - aggregate) (41% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used marijuana** and **4%** (2% - aggregate) (6% - MA YRBS) **report having done so for the first time before the age of 13**. The incidence of lifetime marijuana use increased by grade level (grade 9 – 12%, grade 10 – 31%, grade 11 – 36%, grade 12 – 44%) and was higher among males (females – 23%, males – 36%). Further, **19%** of all respondents (16% - aggregate) (25% - MA YRBS) **report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey** (females – 12%, males – 25%).
- **8% of all respondents** (7% - aggregate) report having ever used some form of synthetic marijuana such as “Spice”, “K2”, or in some edible form (grade 9 – 3%, grade 10 – 6%, grade 11 – 10%, grade 12 – 14%). Male respondents (9%) report ever using synthetic marijuana more frequently than females (6%).
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 8% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so** and another **25%** (total of **33%**) believed that over half had done so. In fact, **19%** of all respondents actually **report having used marijuana during the previous month**.
- **7%** of all respondents (9% - aggregate) **report having ever used any prescription medication that was not prescribed by a doctor for them specifically** (grade 9 – 5%, grade 10 – 4%, grade 11 – 7%, grade 12 – 10%). Male respondents (8%) report ever using prescription medication that was not prescribed to them more frequently than females (4%). Further, **4%** (6% - aggregate) **report doing so in the previous twelve months**.
- **3%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) (5% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase** (females – 1%, males – 4%). The incidence of cocaine use was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 1%, grade 10 – 0%, grade 11 – 2%, grade 12 – 8%).
- **4%** of all respondents (4% - aggregate) **report having ever used a prescription opiate medication that was not prescribed by a doctor specifically for them** (grade 9 – 1%, grade 10 – 3%, grade 11 – 3%, grade 12 – 8%). Male respondents (6%) report ever using prescription opiate medication that was not prescribed to them more frequently than females (1%).
- **2%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) (4% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used MDMA (i.e. molly, ecstasy, “E”, “X”)** (grade 9 – 1%, grade 10 – 1%, grade 11 – 2%, grade 12 – 5%). Male respondents (4%) report ever using MDMA more frequently than females (0%).

ILLEGAL DRUG USE (CONT'D)

- **5%** all respondents (4% - aggregate) **report having ever used any “other type” of illegal drug such as LSD (acid), PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnol (Roofies), or GHB.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 2%, grade 10 – 2%, grade 11 – 4%, grade 12 – 12%). Male respondents (7%) report ever using other illegal drugs more frequently than females (1%).
- **10%** of all respondents (11% - aggregate) (20% - 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 lowest among respondents from grade 9 (grade 9 – 3%, grade 10 – 13%, grade 11 – 9%, grade 12 – 15%) and higher among males (females – 5%, males – 13%).

GAMBLING

- **16%** of all respondents (21% - aggregate) **report having gambled by betting on the lottery, Keno, sporting events, casino games, cards, or racing** at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 13%, grade 10 – 11%, grade 11 – 16%, grade 12 – 23%). Further, male respondents (24%) report doing so much more frequently than females (5%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **40%** of all respondents (43% - aggregate) **report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family**. The incidence of such conversations was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 37%, grade 10 – 42%, grade 11 – 40%, grade 12 – 44%). There was no variation by gender.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **21%** of all respondents (22% - aggregate) (36% - MA YRBS) **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. The incidence of lifetime sexual intercourse increased by grade level (grade 9 – 11%, grade 10 – 15%, grade 11 – 28%, grade 12 – 35%) (females – 19%, males – 23%). Further, **2%** of all respondents (2% - aggregate) (3% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 13**.
- **4%** of all respondents (4% - aggregate) (8% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse with four or more partners** during their lives. The incidence of this behavior increased by grade level (grade 9 – 0%, grade 10 – 3%, grade 11 – 6%, grade 12 – 8%), and was slightly higher among males (females – 2%, males – 5%).
- **18%** of all respondents (17% - aggregate) (28% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse on at least one occasion during the three months prior to the survey**. The incidence of recent sexual intercourse increased by grade level (grade 9 – 7%, grade 10 – 12%, grade 11 – 23%, grade 12 – 31%). There was no variation by gender.
- **4%** of all respondents (5% - aggregate) **report having drunk alcohol or used drugs before they had sexual intercourse the last time** (grade 9 – 2%, grade 10 – 4%, grade 11 – 4%, grade 12 – 8%) (females – 2%, males – 6%).
- **4%** of all respondents (5% - aggregate) report that if they ever had sexual intercourse, a condom was “never” or “rarely” used. The incidence of this was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 4%, grade 10 – 4%, grade 11 – 3%, grade 12 – 6%). There was little variation by gender (females – 2%, males – 5%).
- **31%** of all respondents (29% - aggregate) **report having ever had oral sex, either given or received**. The incidence of lifetime oral sex increased by grade level (grade 9 – 15%, grade 10 – 26%, grade 11 – 37%, grade 12 – 46%). There was little variation by gender (females – 29%, males – 32%). Further, **29%** of all respondents (27% - aggregate) **report having oral sex at least once during the previous twelve months**.
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had ever had sexual intercourse, 16% believed that more than half of their peers had done so**. In fact, **21%** of all respondents actually **report having ever had sexual intercourse**.

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While **55%** of all respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight**, **39%** (39% - aggregate) (46% - MA YRBS) were **trying to lose weight**. Females (55%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (26%) who were much more likely to be trying to gain weight.
- During the thirty days prior to the survey, **in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight**:
  - **59%** of all respondents (58% - aggregate) **report having exercised**. (females – **63%**, males – **56%**)
  - **31%** of all respondents (32% - aggregate) **report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat**. (females – **48%**, males – **16%**)
  - **4%** of all respondents (7% - aggregate) **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more**. (females – **5%**, males – **4%**)
  - **2%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice**. (females - **3%**, males – **2%**)
  - **2%** of all respondents (3% - aggregate) **report having vomited or taken laxatives** (females – **2%**, males – **2%**)
- **20%** of all respondents (21% - aggregate) **report drinking a caffeinated beverage such as coffee, coffee drinks, tea, soda, sports drinks, or drinks like Red Bull** at least once per day on average during the previous seven days. The incidence of this behavior increased by grade level (grade 9 – 12%, grade 10 – 15%, grade 11 – 23%, grade 12 – 32%), and was higher among males (females – 16%, males – 23%).
- **35%** of all respondents (32% - aggregate) **report having eaten breakfast on fewer than five days during the week prior to the survey**. The incidence of this behavior was lowest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 34%, grade 10 – 40%, grade 11 – 27%, grade 12 – 39%). There was no variation by gender.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **79%** of all respondents (73% - aggregate) **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 among 10<sup>th</sup> graders (grade 9 – 84%, grade 10 – 73%, grade 11 – 83%, grade 12 – 74%). Male respondents (86%) report such regular exercise more frequently than females (73%).
- **21%** of all respondents (24% - aggregate) **report that they spend more than three hours doing homework each day on average.** The incidence of which was lowest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 3%, grade 10 – 28%, grade 11 – 28%, grade 12 – 23%). Females report doing so more frequently than males (females – 26%, males – 15%).
- **47%** of all respondents (44% - aggregate) **report that they spend four hours or more per day on an average school day using computers, television, phones or other visual technology.** The incidence of this behavior was lowest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 39%, grade 10 – 41%, grade 11 – 52%, grade 12 – 58%). There was no variation by gender. Females report doing so more frequently than males (females – 51%, males – 42%).

