

**REPORT ON**

**THE 2014 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

**FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, AND 12**

**AGGREGATE REPORT OF**

**STUDENTS FROM THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH,**

**CONCORD, CONCORD-CARLISLE,**

**GROTON-DUNSTABLE, HARVARD, LITTLETON, MAYNARD,**

**NASHOBA REGIONAL, AND WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**FOR**

**EMERSON HOSPITAL**

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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. Julie Towell from the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools; Dr. Curtis Bates from the Boxborough Public Schools; Ms. Kathryn Codianne 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. Rita Detweiler from the Littleton Public Schools; Ms. Lisa MacLean from the Maynard Public Schools; Ms. Patricia Trahman from the Nashoba Regional Schools; Mr. Sean O'Leary from the Westford Public Schools; 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.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 1
SURVEY PROCESS	Page 2
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	Page 3
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS	Page 5
- MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6 AND 8	Page 6
- HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9 THRU 12	Page 16
APPENDIX - HISTOGRAMS	Page 30
- APPENDIX A CURRENT RESULTS AND COMPARISONS OVER TIME	Page 31
- APPENDIX B MISCELLANEOUS SELECTED COMPARISONS	Page 67
- APPENDIX C BEHAVIORAL/EXPERIENTIAL CROSS-TABULATIONS	Page 81

## **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 from eight school districts in the hospital's service area, during March of 2014. 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 2013 and was administered to students from 57 randomly selected public school systems. A comparison with certain of the data from the results of that survey will also be provided. No such survey 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 systems 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.

After much consideration and planning (and being piloted in 2010), the 2014 Grade 6 survey was carried out on a web-enabled basis in all of the eight school districts. Also, the 2014 grade 8 survey (piloted in 2012) was carried out on a web-enabled basis in all of the 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**

After discussions between Emerson Hospital and the Health Education Coordinators from each district it was agreed that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey would be distributed to all students in attendance on the survey dates in grades 6, 8, and 9 through 12. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and eighty students were exempted at parental request. With two exceptions the surveys were administered in each school district during the week of March 10, 2014. In most districts students in each school were surveyed simultaneously, in others they were surveyed over the course of one school day, and in two districts during various weeks in March. In all of the eight school districts grade 6 students and grade 8 students were surveyed in a web-enabled format all simultaneously or over the course of a school day or days. In all cases the survey was administered by professional staff from the 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 10,578 students who responded to the survey: 1,726 from grade 6, 1,826 from grade 8, and 7,026 from the high school. Three sixth graders and four eighth graders did not indicate their gender. At the high school level, sixty-six students (0.9%) did not indicate their gender and sixty-six students (0.9%) did not indicate their grade or indicated they were ungraded. For a description of certain of the demographic characteristics of respondents, please refer to the tables on subsequent pages.

Of the 11,750 students from the eight area school districts involved in this project and enrolled in grades 6, 8, and 9 through 12 on the dates of administration, 10,578 participated in the survey. This constitutes a participation rate of 90% (Grade 6: 92%; Grade 8: 94%; and High School: 89%).

## **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

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

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Aggregate of Respondents From Eight School Districts 2014 YRBS Student Sample

#### Grade and Gender

##### Grade 6: 1,726 Respondents

Females	49.3%
Males	50.5%
Gender not indicated	0.2%

##### Grade 8: 1,826 Respondents

Females	51.0%
Males	48.8%
Gender not indicated	0.2%

##### Grade 9: 1,835 Respondents

Females	49.5%
Males	50.2%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

##### Grade 10: 1,831 Respondents

Females	49.2%
Males	50.4%
Gender not indicated	0.4%

##### Grade 11: 1,750 Respondents

Females	51.7%
Males	48.1%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

##### Grade 12: 1,544 Respondents

Females	54.9%
Males	44.8%
Gender not indicated	0.3%

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (CONT'D)**

**School District**

**Grade 6:**

Acton - Boxborough	22.9%	395
Concord	12.1%	209
Groton - Dunstable	10.6%	183
Harvard	4.7%	81
Littleton	7.3%	126
Maynard	5.7%	98
Nashoba	13.0%	224
Westford	23.8%	<u>410</u>
		1,726

**Grade 8:**

Acton - Boxborough	23.8%	435
Concord	13.0%	237
Groton - Dunstable	11.7%	213
Harvard	4.5%	83
Littleton	6.5%	118
Maynard	5.4%	98
Nashoba	14.0%	256
Westford	21.1%	<u>386</u>
		1,826

**High School:**

Acton - Boxborough	25.0%	1,755
Concord - Carlisle	15.6%	1,097
Groton - Dunstable	10.8%	761
Harvard	4.8%	339
Littleton	5.5%	386
Maynard	4.0%	281
Nashoba	13.0%	916
Westford	21.2%	<u>1,491</u>
		7,026

## **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 eight school districts included in this report. 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 62 questions in grade 6, 89 questions in grade 8, and 112 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 2013 Massachusetts High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist Emerson Hospital and the school systems and communities with which it works in their on-going development of health education programs and services for young people.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6 AND 8SAFETY

- **1.0%** of sixth grade respondents and **2.1%** of eighth grade respondents **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a seatbelt when riding in a car.** There was little or no variation by gender in either grade.
- **10.0%** of sixth grade respondents and **19.4%** of eighth grade respondents **report that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** Males (grade 6 – 11.4%, grade 8 – 21.9%) report never or rarely wearing a bicycle helmet more frequently than female respondents (grade 6 – 8.7%, grade 8 – 16.8%).
- **3.6%** of sixth grade respondents and **4.3%** of eighth grade respondents **report “never” or “rarely” wearing a helmet when they go skiing or snowboarding.** There was very little or no variation by gender in either grade.
- **1.9%** of sixth grade respondents and **3.2%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ridden in a car 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.
- **5.2%** of sixth grade respondents and **5.8%** of eighth grade respondents **report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors (bullied) from others electronically** during the previous twelve months. This experience of cyber-bullying was higher among females (grade 6: females – 6.2%, males – 4.3%; grade 8: females – 7.9%, males – 3.6%). Further, **1.5%** of sixth graders and **2.0%** of eighth graders **report doing so to someone else.**
- **6.5%** of all eighth grade respondents **report sending or receiving sexually explicit messages of photos electronically (also called “sexting”)** during the previous twelve months. There was no variation by gender.

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **5.4%** of sixth grade respondents and **11.0%** of eighth grade respondents **report having carried any type of weapon such as a gun, knife or club** during the thirty days prior to the survey. Male respondents (grade 6 – 9.2%, grade 8 – 19.6%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (grade 6 – 1.4%, grade 8 – 2.8%). Further, **0.1%** of 6<sup>th</sup> grade respondents and **0.3%** of 8<sup>th</sup> grade respondents **report having done so on school property during the school day.**
- **10.5%** of sixth grade respondents and **7.3%** of eighth grade respondents **report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated or experienced hostile behaviors from others (bullied) in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was little variation by gender in either grade. Further, **3.6%** of sixth graders and **1.5%** of eighth graders **report doing so to someone else.**
- **5.2%** of eighth grade respondents **report having received unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature which made them uncomfortable (sexual harassment) in school** during the twelve months prior to the survey (females – 7.1%, males – 3.2%).
- **2.0%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with.** There was no variation by gender. **0.6%** of all respondents **report having ever done so to someone else.**
- **8.0%** of eighth grade respondents **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. There was no variation by gender. **5.0%** of all respondents **report having done so to someone else.**
- **11.2%** of eighth grade respondents **report having hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises)** on at least one occasion during the previous twelve months. Female respondents (16.1%) report doing so more than twice as frequently as males (5.9%),

STRESS

- **Nearly one-fourth (24.3%)** of sixth grade respondents and **42.8%** of eighth graders **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of their academic workload** during the previous twelve months. Females in both grades (grade 6 – 26.2%, grade 8 – 49.4%) report this experience more frequently than males (grade 6 – 22.3%, grade 8 – 35.9%).
- **15.0%** of sixth grade respondents and **24.4%** of eighth grade respondents **report having experienced somewhat high or very high levels of stress as a result of events in school** during the previous twelve months prior to the survey. In grade 6 there was little variation by gender while in grade 8 female respondents report this experience more frequently (females – 29.5%, males – 19.2%).
- 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 – 36.6%, grade 8 – 49.1%), **watching television** (grade 6 – 30.1%, grade 8 – 38.8%), **meditation/relaxation activities** (grade 6 – 18.8%, grade 8 – 20.9%), and **eating** (grade 6 – 16.4%, grade 8 – 29.0%). Of note is that **34.7%** of sixth graders and **34.1%** of eighth graders also **report using “other” strategies to deal with stress**.

SUICIDE

- **4.4%** of sixth grade respondents and **6.4%** of eighth grade respondents **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was no variation by gender in grade 6 (grade 8: females – 8.7%, males – 3.8%).
- **1.5%** of sixth grade respondents and **1.9%** of eighth grade respondents **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was no variation by gender in grade 6 (grade 8: females – 2.9%, males – 0.8%).

TOBACCO USE

- **0.6%** of sixth grade respondents and **3.6%** of eighth grade respondents (females – 2.0%, males – 5.3%) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking**. Further, **0.4%** of sixth graders and **1.4%** of eighth graders **report having smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before the age of 11**.
- **0.1%** of sixth grade respondents and **1.0%** of eighth grade respondents **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**.
- **1.0%** of eighth graders **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars** during the thirty days prior to the survey.
- **0.4%** of sixth grade respondents and **3.5%** of eighth graders **report having ever used an electronic cigarette** (grade 8: females – 2.8%, males – 4.3%).
- When eighth graders were asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had smoked cigarettes during the previous month, **9% believed that over one-quarter of their peers had done so**. In fact, **1%** of all eighth grade respondents actually **report having smoked cigarettes during the previous month**.

ALCOHOL USE

- **2.9%** of sixth grade respondents and **11.6%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever had a drink of alcohol other than for religious reasons**. Males in both grades (grade 6 – 4.3%, grade 8 – 14.8%) were more likely to have done so than were females (grade 6 – 1.4%, grade 8 – 8.4%). Further, **3.5%** of sixth graders and **4.6%** of eighth graders **report having done so for the first time before the age of 12**.
- **1.1%** of sixth grade respondents and **4.2%** of eighth grade respondents **report having had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**. There was little variation by gender in either grade.
- **2.6%** of all eighth grade respondents **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 (females – 1.9%, males – 3.3%).
- 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, **5%** believed that over half had done so and another **14%** (total of **19%**) believed that over a quarter of their peers had done so. In fact, **4%** of all eighth grade respondents actually **report having used alcohol during the previous month**.

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **0.2%** of sixth grade respondents and **2.5%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever used marijuana**. 8<sup>th</sup> grade males (4.0%) were more likely to have ever used marijuana than were females (1.2%). Further, **1.2%** of 8<sup>th</sup> graders **report having used marijuana for the first time before the age of 12**.
- **0.2%** of sixth grade respondents and **1.6%** of eighth grade respondents **report having used marijuana on at least one occasion** during the thirty days prior to the survey. In grade 8, male respondents (2.6%) report recent marijuana use more frequently than females (0.5%).
- **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 at least one-quarter of their peers had done so**. In fact, **2%** of all eighth grade respondents actually **report having used marijuana during the previous month**.
- **3.9%** of eighth grade respondents and **2.9%** of eighth grade respondents **report having sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high** at least once during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was very little variation by gender in either grade.
- **4.1%** of sixth grade respondents and **7.7%** of all eighth grade respondents **report having ever used any prescription medication that was not prescribed for them specifically by a doctor** (grade 6: females – 3.6%, males – 4.6%; grade 8: females – 8.9%, males – 6.2%).
- **0.6%** of eighth graders **report having used MDMA (i.e. molly, ecstasy, “E”, “X”)** at least once during their lives (females – 0.2%, males – 0.9%).
- **0.2%** of sixth grade respondents and **2.8%** of eighth grade respondents **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 (grade 8: females – 2.1%, males – 3.5%).

GAMBLING

- **10.3%** of sixth grade respondents and **17.4%** of eighth grade respondents **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 – 15.1%, grade 8 – 24.0%) report this behavior much more frequently than females (grade 6 – 5.3%, grade 8 – 11.0%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **13.4%** of sixth grade respondents and **36.1%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family**. There was little variation by gender in either grade.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **3.5%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. Male respondents (5.5%) were more likely to have had this experience than were females (1.6%). **1.6% of all eighth graders report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 12.**
- **4.0%** of eighth grade respondents **report having ever had oral sex, either given or received**. Male respondents (5.8%) report this experience more frequently than females (2.2%).

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- **Three-fifths** of all respondents (grade 6 – 62.4%, grade 8 – 58.8%) **described themselves as being at about the right weight** while many were trying to lose weight (grade 6 – 27.5%, grade 8 – 32.2%) and others were trying to gain weight (grade 6 – 10.4%, grade 8 – 11.8%). Female respondents, especially in grade 8 (42.2%), were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were eighth grade males (21.9%).
- During the thirty days prior to the survey, **in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:**
  - **60.5%** of sixth graders and **56.4%** of eighth graders **report having exercised** (grade 6: females – 60.0%, males – 61.0%; grade 8: females – 58.2%, males – 54.7%).
  - **21.0%** of sixth graders and **23.7%** of eighth graders **report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat** (grade 6: females – 21.9%, males – 20.0%; grade 8: females – 29.5%, males – 17.8%).
  - **2.1%** of sixth graders and **4.0%** of eighth graders **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more** (grade 6: females – 2.3%, males – 1.9%; grade 8: females – 6.2%, males – 1.8%).
  - **0.4%** of sixth graders and **1.6%** of eighth graders **report having taken any diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice.** There was no variation by gender.
  - **0.7%** of sixth graders and **1.2%** of eighth graders **report having vomited or taken laxatives.** There was no variation by gender.
- **6.5%** of sixth grade respondents and **12.1%** of eighth grade respondents **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. In grade 6 there was no variation by gender (grade 8: females – 10.8%, males – 13.2%).
- **13.3%** of sixth grade respondents and **23.2%** of eighth grade respondents **report that they ate breakfast on fewer than five days during the week before the survey.** In grade 6 there was no variation by gender (grade 8: females – 27.1%, males – 18.9%).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **78.9%** of sixth grade respondents and **76.2%** of eighth grade respondents **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.** There was no variation by gender in grade 6 (grade 8: females – 73.8%, males – 79.2%).
- **16.8 %** of sixth grade respondents and **42.3%** of eighth grade respondents **report that they get seven or fewer hours of sleep each night on average.** There was little variation by gender in grade 6, while in grade 8 females (49.4%) report seven or fewer hours of sleep more frequently than males (34.9%).
- **20.0%** of sixth grade respondents and **34.5%** of eighth grade respondents **report that they watch TV, play video games, or use a computer for at least 3 hours or more per day on an average school day outside of school.** Male respondents in both grades (grade 6 – 23.4%, grade 8 – 36.4%) report doing so more frequently than females (grade 6 – 16.4%, grade 8 – 32.5%).

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

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was administered to students from eight school districts in grades 9 through 12 during March of 2014. 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 2013 Massachusetts YRBS. It should be noted that several of the questions in this survey were not asked of students in the 2013 Massachusetts YRBS.

SAFETY

- **3.4%** of all respondents (9% - MA YRBS) report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else. There was little variation by grade (females – 2.2%, males – 4.7%). Among those most likely to drive, **2.3%** of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and **4.2%** of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when they themselves drive.
- **7.0%** of all respondents report “never” or “rarely” wearing a helmet when they go skiing or snowboarding (grade 9 – 5.0%, grade 10 – 6.2%, grade 11 – 7.7%, grade 12 – 9.1%). Male respondents (8.9%) report doing so more frequently than females (5.1%).
- **12.7%** of all respondents 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 each year by grade (grade 9 – 6.3%, grade 10 – 9.9%, grade 11 – 14.8%, grade 12 – 20.0%). Male respondents (15.0%) report this experience more frequently than females (10.2%).
- **4.0%** of all respondents (7% - 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. Respondents from grade 12 (7.0%) and grade 11 (5.1%) were most likely to have done so. The groups which most frequently reported this behavior were 11<sup>th</sup> grade males (6.3%), 12<sup>th</sup> grade females (4.4%), and 12<sup>th</sup> grade males (10.1%). By comparison, **8.5%** report driving a car or other vehicle when they had been using marijuana during the same period of time.
- **More than one-fifth (21.4%)** of all respondents report having driven a car while using a cell phone to talk without a hands-free option at least once during the previous thirty days. Among those most likely to drive, 31.7% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and 54.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report having done so (females – 20.3%, males – 22.5%). By comparison, **17.4%** report driving a car while using a cell phone to text, surf the web, or access social media during the same period of time.
- **5.5%** of all respondents report having been repeatedly threatened, humiliated, or experienced hostile behaviors (bullied) from others electronically during the previous twelve months. There was little variation by grade or gender. **2.5%** of all respondents report doing so to someone else.
- **22.1%** of all respondents report having sent or received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called “sexting”) during the twelve months prior to the survey. The incidence of this experience increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 14.9%, grade 10 – 21.7%, grade 11 – 25.3%, grade 12 – 26.9%). Male respondents (25.3%) report this experience more frequently than females (19.0%).

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **1.4%** of all respondents **report having carried a gun on school property** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was little variation by grade (grade 9 – 0.9%, grade 10 – 1.3%, grade 11 – 1.3%, grade 12 – 1.6%). Males (2.0%) report doing so more frequently than females (0.8%).
- **3.3%** of all respondents (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 (grade 9 – 2.1%, grade 10 – 3.2%, grade 11 – 3.6%, grade 12 – 4.0%). Males (5.0%) were more likely to have carried a weapon on school property than were females (1.5%). Further, **2.4%** report having done so **during the school day**.
- **2.5%** of all respondents (4% - MA YRBS) **report having been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was no variation by grade and very little variation by gender (females – 1.6%, males – 3.3%).
- **3.9%** of all respondents (8% - MA YRBS) **report having ever been hurt physically or sexually by a date or someone they were going out with**. The incidence of this experience increased slightly each year by grade (grade 9 – 1.8%, grade 10 – 4.0%, grade 11 – 4.1%, grade 12 – 4.9%). Female respondents (5.3%) report this experience more frequently than males (2.3%) and **1.6%** report having ever done so to someone else.
- **One-tenth (9.9%)** of all respondents **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 increased slightly each year by grade (grade 9 – 7.5%, grade 10 – 9.5%, grade 11 – 10.7%, grade 12 – 11.7%) (females – 11.1%, males – 8.6%). Among all respondents, **7.8%** report having done so to someone else.
- **6.7%** of all respondents **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 9 (grade 9 – 8.3%, grade 10 – 8.1%, grade 11 – 4.2%, grade 12 – 5.3%) and there was very little variation by gender. Further, **1.9%** report doing so to someone else.

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS (CONT'D)

- **8.7%** of all respondents **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. There was very little variation by grade (grade 9 – 8.9%, grade 10 – 8.9%, grade 11 – 7.7%, grade 12 – 8.2%). The incidence of this experience was higher among female respondents (females – 12.6%, males 4.3%).
- **13.6%** of all respondents (14% - MA YRBS) **report having hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises) on at least one occasion** during the previous twelve months. There was little variation by grade (grade 9 – 12.7%, grade 10 – 13.8%, grade 11 – 14.3%, grade 12 – 12.5%). Female respondents (19.4%) report such self-injury much more frequently than males (7.1%).

STRESS

- **More than three respondents in five (61.2%) 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 – 52.1%, grade 10 – 61.0%, grade 11 – 69.1%, grade 12 – 63.5%) and was much higher among females (females – 71.5%, males – 50.2%).
- **One-third (33.8%) of all respondents 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 lowest in grade 9 (grade 9 – 26.8%, grade 10 – 32.6%, grade 11 – 38.1%, grade 12 – 37.7%) and higher among female respondents (females – 38.6%, males – 28.3%).
- 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 (54.0%), watching television (42.5%), eating (34.5%), and meditation/relaxation activities (20.7%)**. Of note is that **30.3%** also report using “other” strategies to deal with stress and **15.1%** report doing nothing.

SUICIDE

- **12.1%** of all respondents (12% - MA YRBS) **report having seriously considered attempting suicide** during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was little variation by grade (grade 9 – 10.1%, grade 10 – 12.8%, grade 11 – 13.1%, grade 12 – 11.9%). Female respondents (14.7%) report having done so more frequently than males (9.2%).
- **3.7%** of all respondents (6% - MA YRBS) **report having actually attempted suicide** on at least one occasion during the twelve months prior to the survey. There was very little variation by grade (grade 9 – 2.7%, grade 10 – 4.2%, grade 11 – 4.3%, grade 12 – 3.0%) or gender (females – 4.2%, males – 3.0%).

TOBACCO USE

- **One-sixth (16.0%)** of all respondents (32% - MA YRBS) **report having ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs.** The incidence of lifetime cigarette smoking increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 8.3%, grade 10 – 11.4%, grade 11 – 19.4%, grade 12 – 26.1%). Males (18.2%) report having ever tried cigarette smoking more frequently than females (13.8%). Further, **3.4%** of all respondents **report having smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before the age of 13.**
- **6.6%** of all respondents (11% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one day during the thirty days prior to the survey.** The incidence of recent cigarette smoking also increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 3.2%, grade 10 – 5.3%, grade 11 – 7.7%, grade 12 – 10.1%) (females – 5.2%, males – 7.9%).
- **7.6%** of all respondents (11% - MA YRBS) **report having smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 3.0%, grade 10 – 5.9%, grade 11 – 8.8%, grade 12 – 13.0%). Males (11.9%) were much more likely to have done so than were females (3.4%).
- **More than one respondent in six (17.9%) reports having ever used an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette).** The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 10.5%, grade 10 – 14.0%, grade 11 – 23.2%, grade 12 – 24.8%) and was higher among male respondents (females – 13.0%, males – 23.0%).

ALCOHOL USE

- **More than half (52.9%)** of all respondents (63% - 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 7.0%** (11% - MA YRBS) **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13.** The incidence of lifetime alcohol use increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 33.5%, grade 10 – 48.7%, grade 11 – 61.8%, grade 12 – 70.3%). There was no variation by gender.
- **28.6%** of all respondents (36% - 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 also increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 12.5%, grade 10 – 25.0%, grade 11 – 34.9%, grade 12 – 44.2%). There was little variation by gender (females – 27.6%, males – 29.5%).
- **One respondent in six (16.0%)** of all respondents (19% - MA YRBS) **reports 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 increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 5.6%, grade 10 – 12.1%, grade 11 – 20.5%, grade 12 – 27.1%). Males (17.8%) report binge drinking more frequently than females (14.1%).
- **Nearly one-quarter (24.4%)** of all respondents **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 each year by grade (grade 9 – 10.2%, grade 10 – 21.3%, grade 11 – 29.0%, grade 12 – 39.0%). 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, 16% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so and another 34% (total of 50%) 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

- **One-quarter (26.9%)** of all respondents (41% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used marijuana** and **2.9%** (7% - MA YRBS) **report having done so for the first time before the age of 13**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 11.2%, grade 10 – 20.9%, grade 11 – 34.7%, grade 12 – 43.0%). Males (29.8%) were more likely to have ever used marijuana than were females (23.9%). Further, **16.7%** of all respondents (25% - MA YRBS) **report having used marijuana on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey** (females – 13.1%, males – 20.5%).
- **When asked their perception about how many students at their grade level in their school had used marijuana during the previous month, 7% believed that over three-quarters of their peers had done so and another 23% (total of 30%) believed that over half had done so.** In fact, **17%** of all respondents actually **report having used marijuana during the previous month**.
- **10.5%** of all respondents **report having ever used any prescription medication that was not prescribed by a doctor for them specifically** (grade 9 – 6.6%, grade 10 – 9.5%, grade 11 – 12.3%, grade 12 – 13.9%). There was no variation by gender. Further, **6.5%** **report doing so in the previous twelve months**.
- **2.8%** of all respondents (4% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase**. The incidence of lifetime cocaine use increased slightly each year by grade (grade 9 – 1.4%, grade 10 – 2.2%, grade 11 – 3.2%, grade 12 – 3.8%) and was higher among males (3.7%) than females (1.9%).
- **2.4%** of all respondents (3% - MA YRBS) **report having sniffed glue, or breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high** on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey. There was very little variation by grade or gender.
- **4.0%** of all respondents (5% - MA YRBS) **report having ever used MDMA (i.e. molly, ecstasy, “E”, “X”)**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 1.9%, grade 10 – 3.3%, grade 11 – 4.7%, grade 12 – 5.4%). Males (5.0%) report using MDMA more than females (2.9%).

ILLEGAL DRUG USE (CONT'D)

- **5.1%** all respondents **report having ever used any “other type” of illegal drug such as LSD, PCP, mushrooms, Ketamine (Special K), Rohypnal (Roofies) or GHB.** The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 2.2%, grade 10 – 4.0%, grade 11 – 6.5%, grade 12 – 7.1%). Male respondents (6.8%) were more likely to have ever used “other drugs” than were females (3.4%).
- **12.4%** of all respondents (23% - 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 (grade 9 – 9.5%, grade 10 – 12.7%, grade 11 – 12.8%, grade 12 – 14.2%). Male respondents (15.8%) were more likely to have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property than were females (9.0%).

GAMBLING

- **One respondent in five (20.4%)** of all respondents **reports 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 – 17.0%, grade 10 – 19.0%, grade 11 – 18.8%, grade 12 – 27.1%). Males (28.9%) report having done so much more frequently than females (12.2%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **41.7%** of all respondents **report having ever talked about AIDS or HIV infection with their parents or other adults in their family** (grade 9 – 38.7%, grade 10 – 43.2%, grade 11 – 41.8%, grade 12 – 43.5%). Female respondents (43.0%) report having had such a conversation slightly more frequently than males (40.3%).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **Nearly one-fourth (24.4%)** of all respondents (38% - MA YRBS) **report having ever had sexual intercourse**. The incidence of lifetime sexual intercourse increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 7.3%, grade 10 – 15.3%, grade 11 – 32.2%, grade 12 – 46.1%) (females – 22.6%, males – 26.3%). Further, **2.1%** of all respondents (3% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 13**.
- **5.4%** of all respondents (9% - MA YRBS) **report having had sexual intercourse with four or more partners** during their lives (grade 9 – 2.0%, grade 10 – 3.5%, grade 11 – 5.6%, grade 12 – 10.3%). There was very little variation by gender (females – 4.6%, males – 6.1%).
- **19.1%** of all respondents (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 each year by grade (grade 9 – 4.2%, grade 10 – 11.9%, grade 11 – 25.3%, grade 12 – 37.0%). There was no variation by gender.
- **6.4%** of all respondents **report having drunk alcohol or used drugs before they had sexual intercourse the last time**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 2.1%, grade 10 – 5.0%, grade 11 – 8.3%, grade 12 – 10.1%) (females – 4.8%, males – 7.9%).
- **31.7%** of all respondents **report having ever had oral sex, either given or received**. The incidence of lifetime oral sex increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 11.7%, grade 10 – 24.7%, grade 11 – 41.4%, grade 12 – 52.0%). Males (34.0%) report this experience more frequently than females (29.4%). Further, **29.4%** of all respondents **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 have ever had sexual intercourse, 24% believed that over one-half of their peers had done so**. In fact, one-quarter (**24%**) of all respondents actually **report having ever had sexual intercourse**.

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While **59.1%** of all respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight**, **39.1%** (45% - MA YRBS) were **trying to lose weight** (grade 9 – 35.3%, grade 10 – 37.8%, grade 11 – 40.1%, grade 12 – 44.2%). Females (55.5%) were much more likely to be trying to lose weight than were males (21.7%) 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**:
  - **59.7%** of all respondents **report having exercised**. (females – 66.6%, males – 52.6%)
  - **33.6%** of all respondents **report having eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat**. (females – 47.1%, males – 19.3%)
  - **7.0%** of all respondents (10% - MA YRBS) **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more**. (females – 9.9%, males – 3.7%)
  - **3.0%** of all respondents (3% - MA YRBS) **report having taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice**. (females – 3.5%, males – 2.5%)
  - **3.8%** of all respondents (4% - MA YRBS) **report having vomited or taken laxatives**. (females – 5.3%, males – 2.0%)
- **One respondent in five (22.6%) reports 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 regularly drinking caffeinated beverages increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 16.3%, grade 10 – 20.4%, grade 11 – 24.1%, grade 12 – 30.1%). There was no variation by gender.
- **31.7%** of all respondents **report having eaten breakfast on fewer than five days during the week prior to the survey**. The incidence of this behavior increased each year by grade (grade 9 – 27.9%, grade 10 – 30.4%, grade 11 – 33.5%, grade 12 – 35.6%). There was little variation by gender (females – 32.5%, males – 30.7%).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **Nearly three-quarters (73.6%)** of all respondents **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 highest in grade 10 (grade 9 – 74.7%, grade 10 – 75.6%, grade 11 – 72.1%, grade 12 – 71.9%). Males (76.7%) report having done so more frequently than females (71.1%).
- **70.8%** of all respondents **report that they get seven or fewer hours of sleep each night on average** (grade 9 – 64.1%, grade 10 – 68.4%, grade 11 – 75.4%, grade 12 – 76.2%). Female respondents (74.9%) were more likely to get seven or fewer hours of sleep each night than were males (66.5%).
- **38.2%** of all respondents **report that they watch television, play video games, or use a computer 3 hours or more per day on an average school day outside of school.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 12 (grade 9 – 35.1%, grade 10 – 39.0%, grade 11 – 36.9%, grade 12 – 41.7%). Male respondents (42.1%) report doing so more frequently than females (34.1%).