

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

Report to School Committee
November 25, 2024

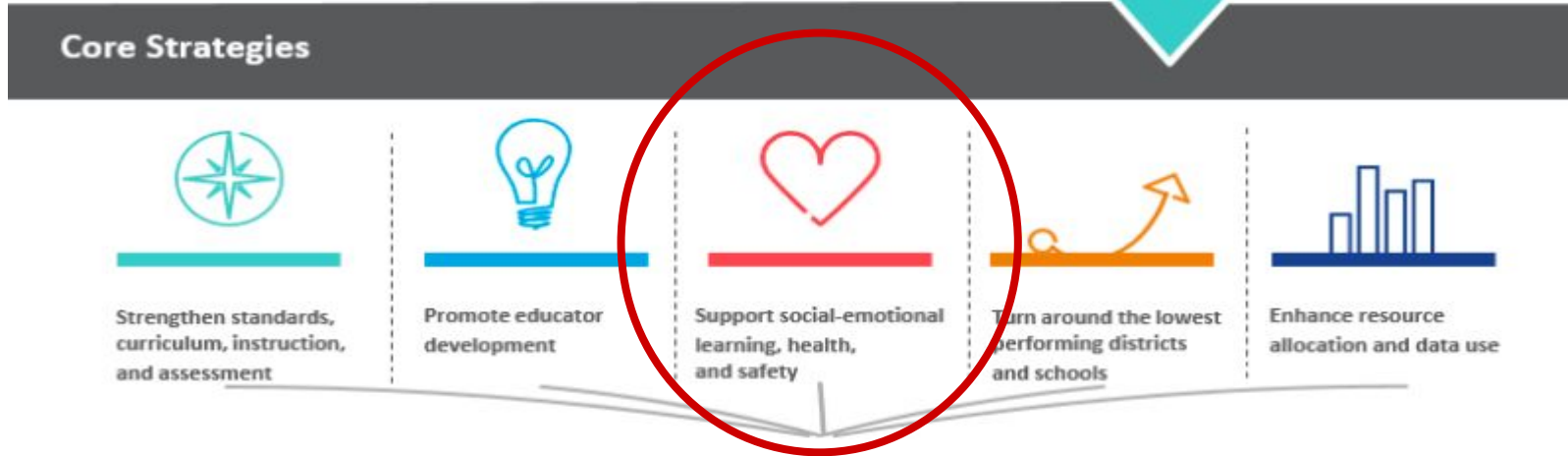


Agenda

- Guiding Language and the WSCC Model
- MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey: Methods
- Key Indicators: Data Highlights
- Strategic Actions: Moving Forward
- Questions and Discussion

MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

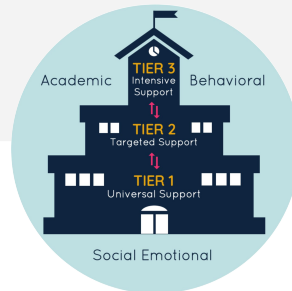
5 Core Strategies



Supporting the social, emotional, and health needs of students and families by improving school culture and climate; enhancing social and emotional competencies; strengthening family and community engagement; and promoting health, wellness, and safety.

Sudbury Public Schools Strategic Objectives

1. **Wellness:** Sudbury Public Schools promote the social, emotional, and physical wellness of students.
2. **Innovation:** Sudbury Public Schools implement innovative, research-based curriculum and educational practices.
3. **Meeting the Needs of ALL Students:** Sudbury Public Schools provides equitable learning experiences to engage and challenge every student.



Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child



[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- Emphasis on alignment, integration, and collaboration
- Connections between health and academic achievement
- Evidence-based practices and policies to enhance protective factors and address risk behaviors
- Strong community partnerships

Protective Factors: *Characteristics that promote resilience, foster success, and reduce risk behaviors.*

Individual-Level Protective Factors

- Problem-solving skills
- Positive self-image
- Healthy stress management strategies

Family-Level Protective Factors

- Expressions of care
- Predictable schedules
- Clear & consistent expectations

School-Level Protective Factors

- Positive school climate & culture
- Trusting relationships with staff
- Opportunities for leadership roles or participation in clubs

Community-Level Protective Factors

- Safe neighborhoods & community
 - Access to resources - mental health services & recreational programs
-

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

What it is ...

- Regional youth health survey, administered during the fall of 2023, 38,074 middle & high school students from 25 communities
- Based upon CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS)
- Grant-funded project by the MetroWest Health Foundation
- Education Development Center (EDC) oversees the project
- Curtis students completed the survey online on November 9, 2023
- **Curtis n = 731, grades 6 - 8, representing an 87% participation rate** due to absences and opt outs



MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

- **Validity and Reliability:** Research indicates that youth respond truthfully when their participation
 - is voluntary;
 - they perceive the survey as important; and
 - they understand measures have been taken to protect their privacy and anonymity.
- **Generalizability:** the high participation rate makes the student data highly representative of the whole student population
- **Format:** 110 questions on protective factors and risk behaviors
- **Translations:** in English, Portuguese, and Spanish

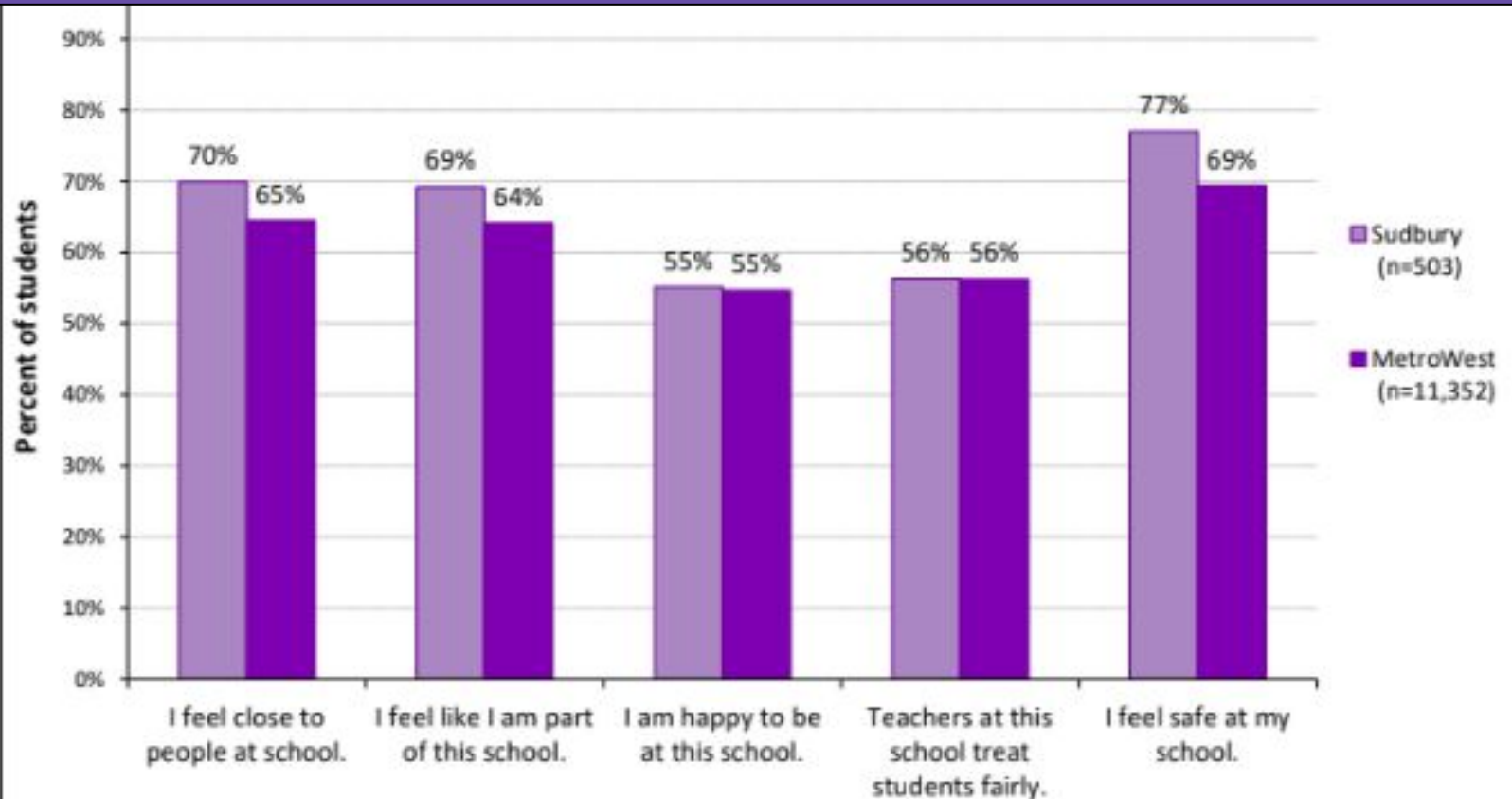


2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Timeline



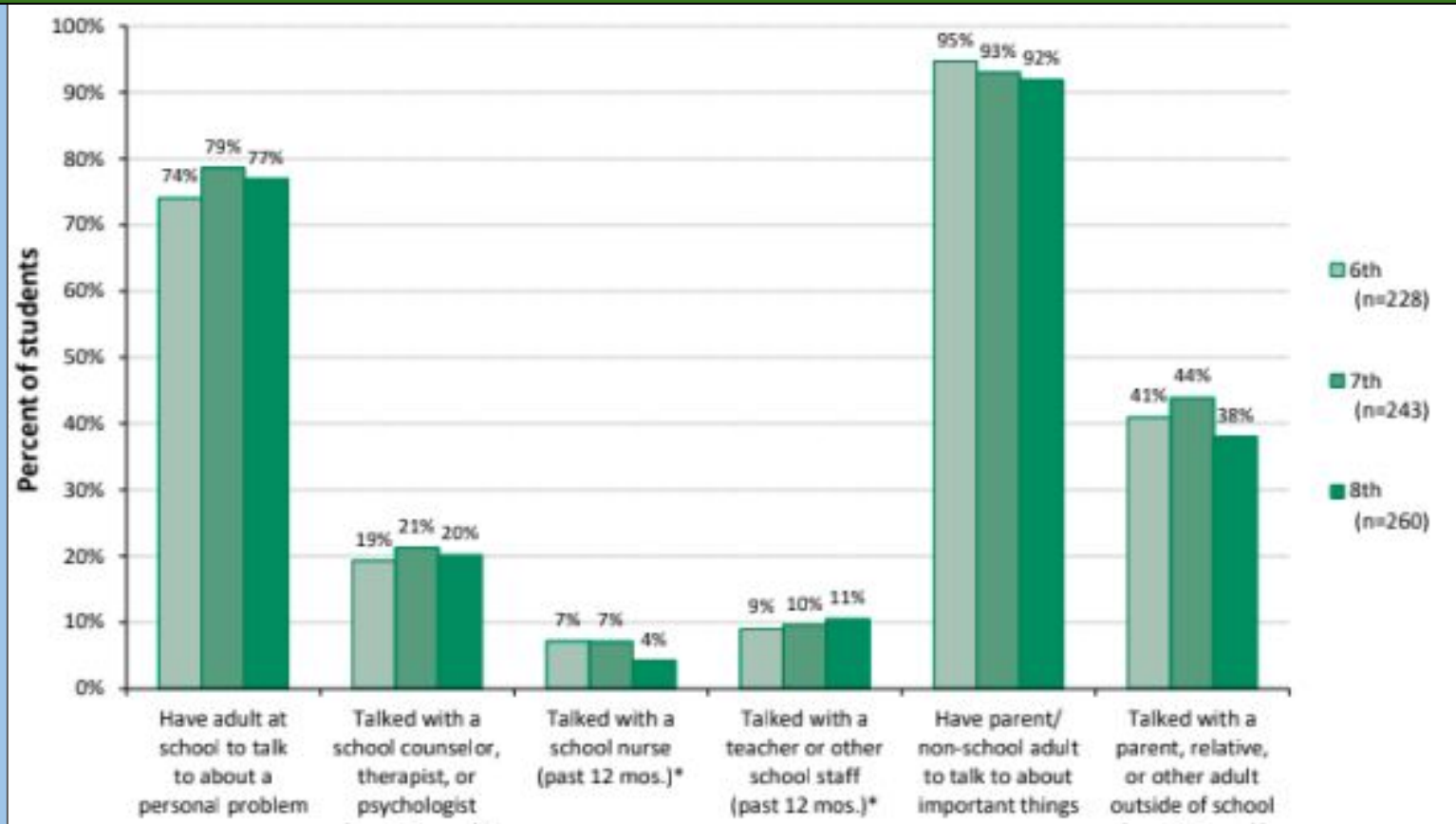
School Connectedness at the District and Regional Levels

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



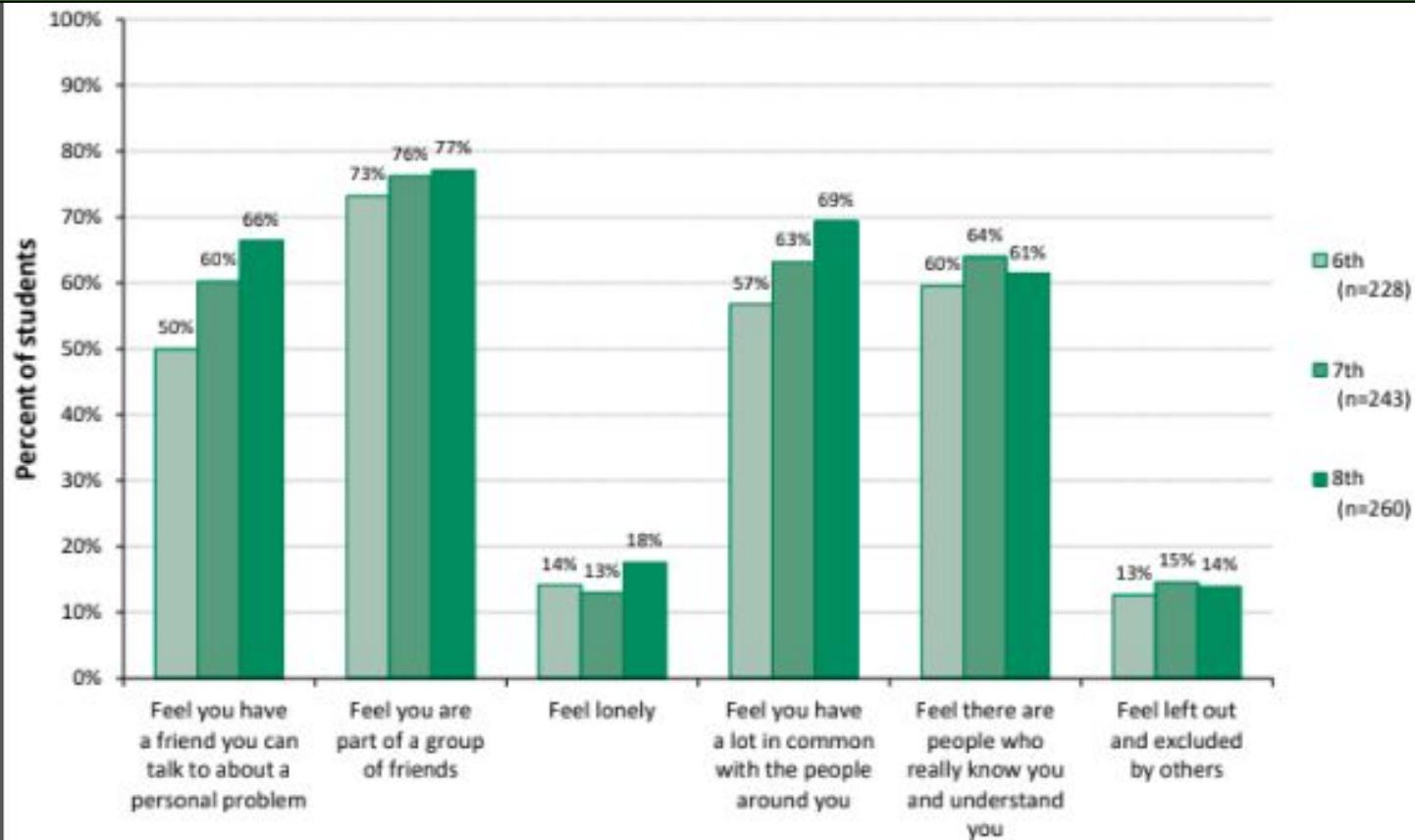
Adult Support by Grade

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023



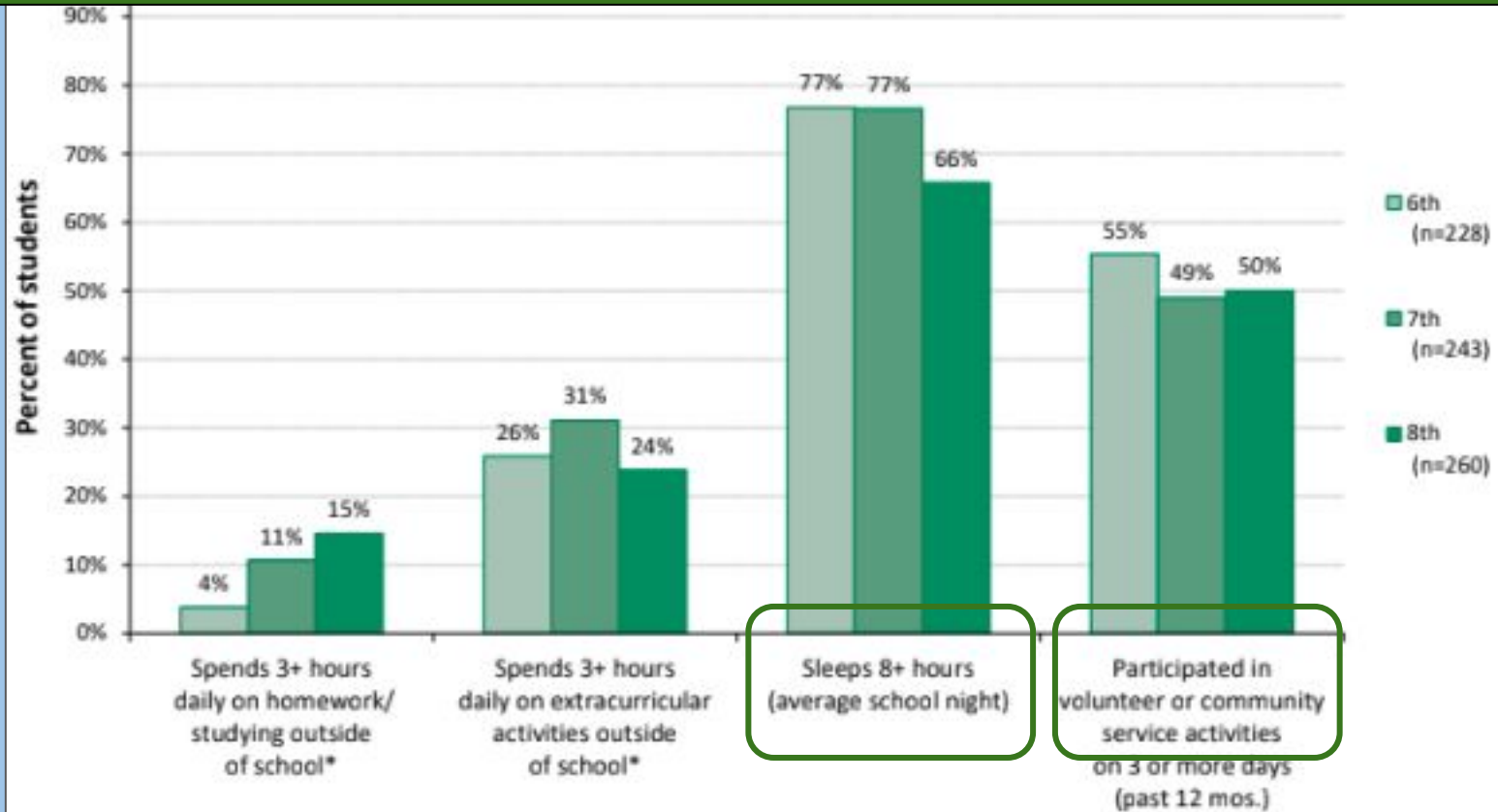
Peer Support by Grade

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023



Student Time Utilization by Grade

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023



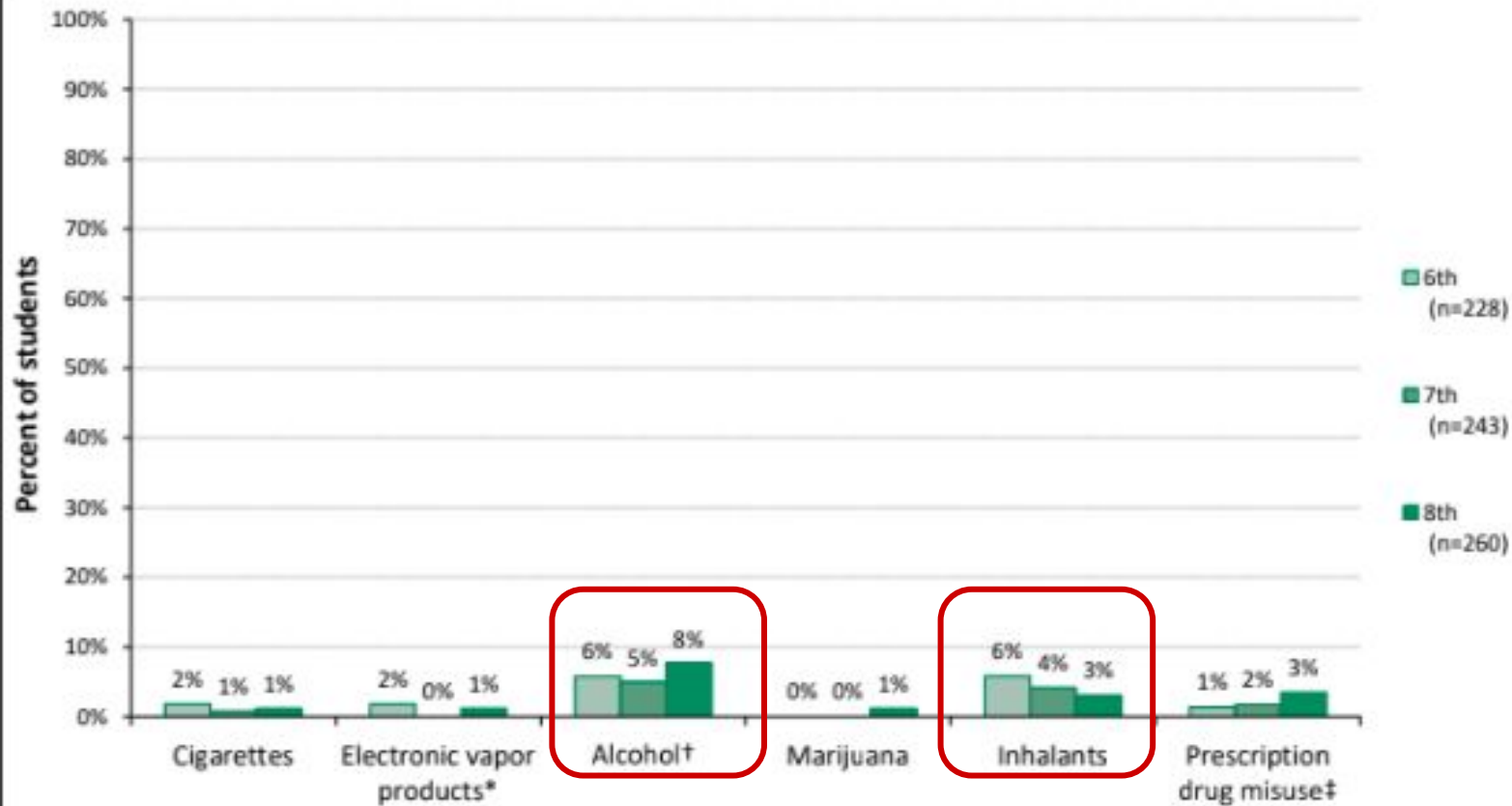
2006-2023 Trends in Substance Use

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023

	Year of Survey (%)								
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2021	2023
	—	—	(620)	(664)	(650)	(623)	(563)	(558)	(503)
SUBSTANCE USE									
Lifetime cigarette smoking	—	—	5.0	2.1	3.0	0.8	1.1	2.5	1.0
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	—	—	3.3	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.2	1.1	0.4
Lifetime electronic vapor product use*	—	—	—	—	1.4	1.9	3.5	3.4	0.6
Current electronic vapor product use (past 30 days)*	—	—	—	—	0.8	0.5	2.7	1.3	0.4
Lifetime alcohol use	—	—	8.9	7.2	9.0	8.3	6.1	10.3	6.4
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	—	—	4.4	2.9	3.7	3.9	2.0	3.1	2.4
Binge drinking (past 30 days) [†]	—	—	1.6	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.0	1.3	0.2
Lifetime marijuana use	—	—	2.6	1.4	1.4	0.5	0.9	1.6	0.6
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	—	—	1.3	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.5	1.3	0.0
Lifetime inhalant use	—	—	3.7	3.2	2.3	1.8	1.8	4.7	3.6

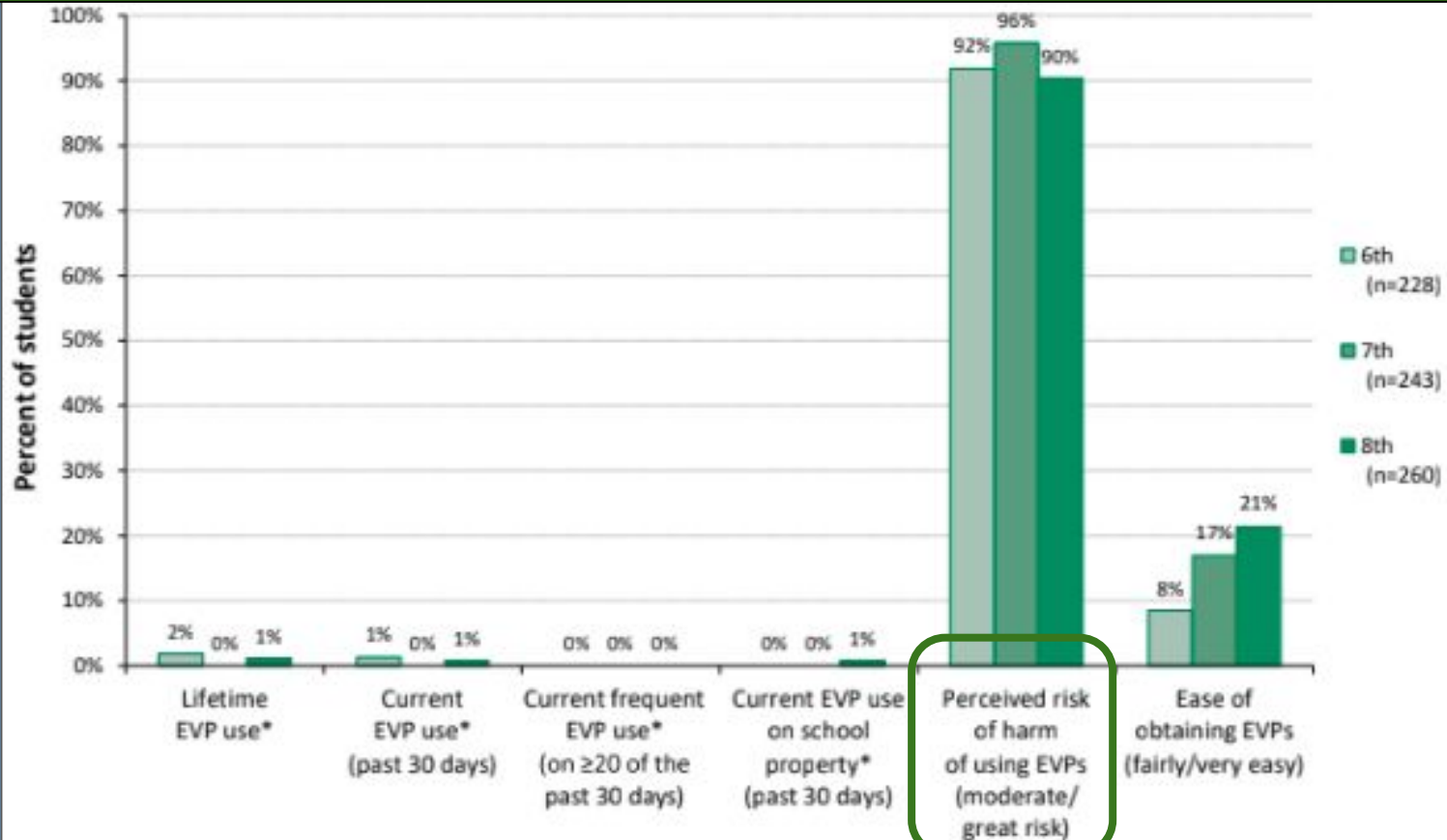
Lifetime Substance Use by Grade

Curtis Grades 6 - 8 - November 2023



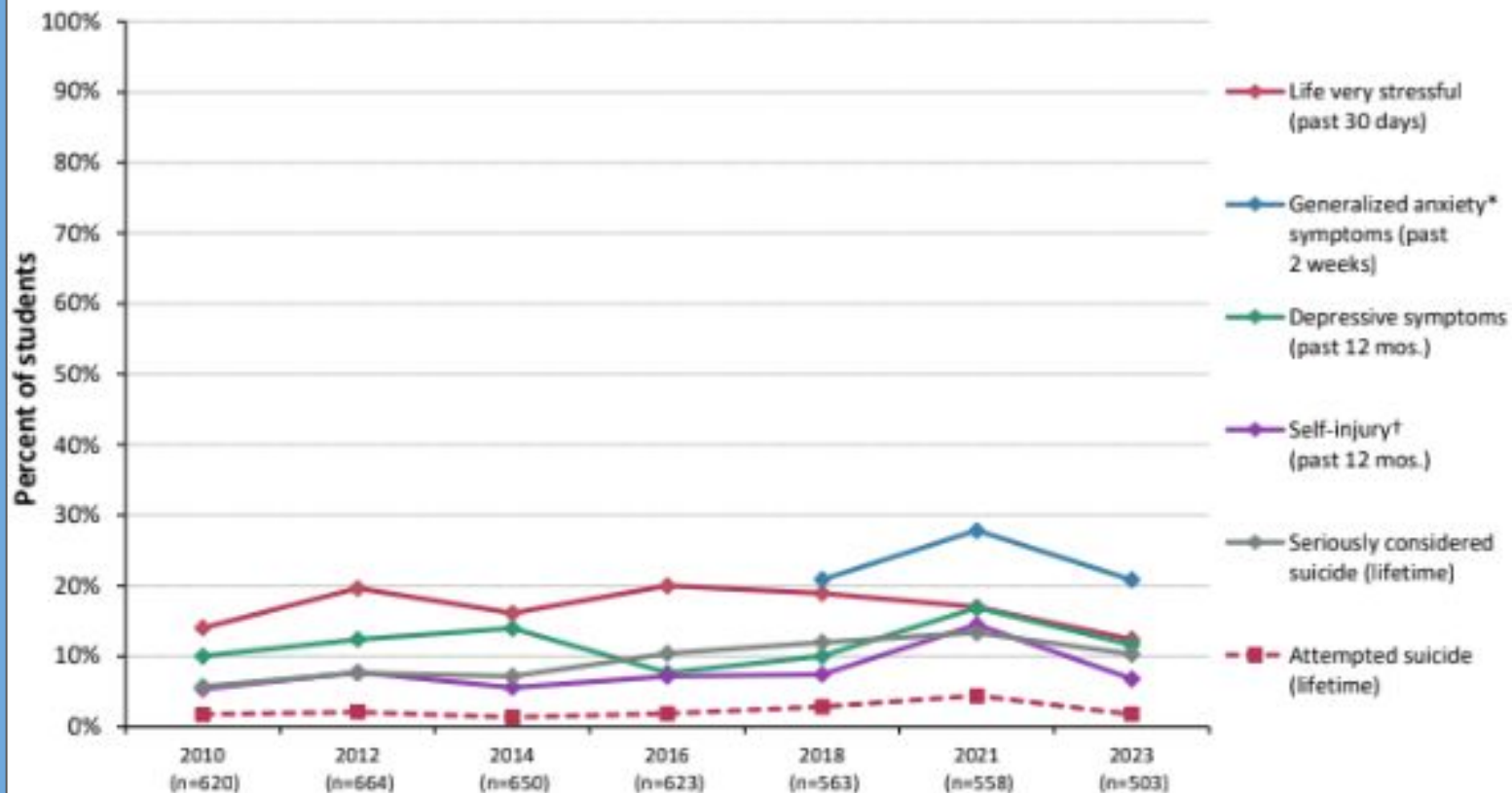
Use of Electronic Vapor Products (EVPs)

Curtis Grades 6 - 8 - November 2023



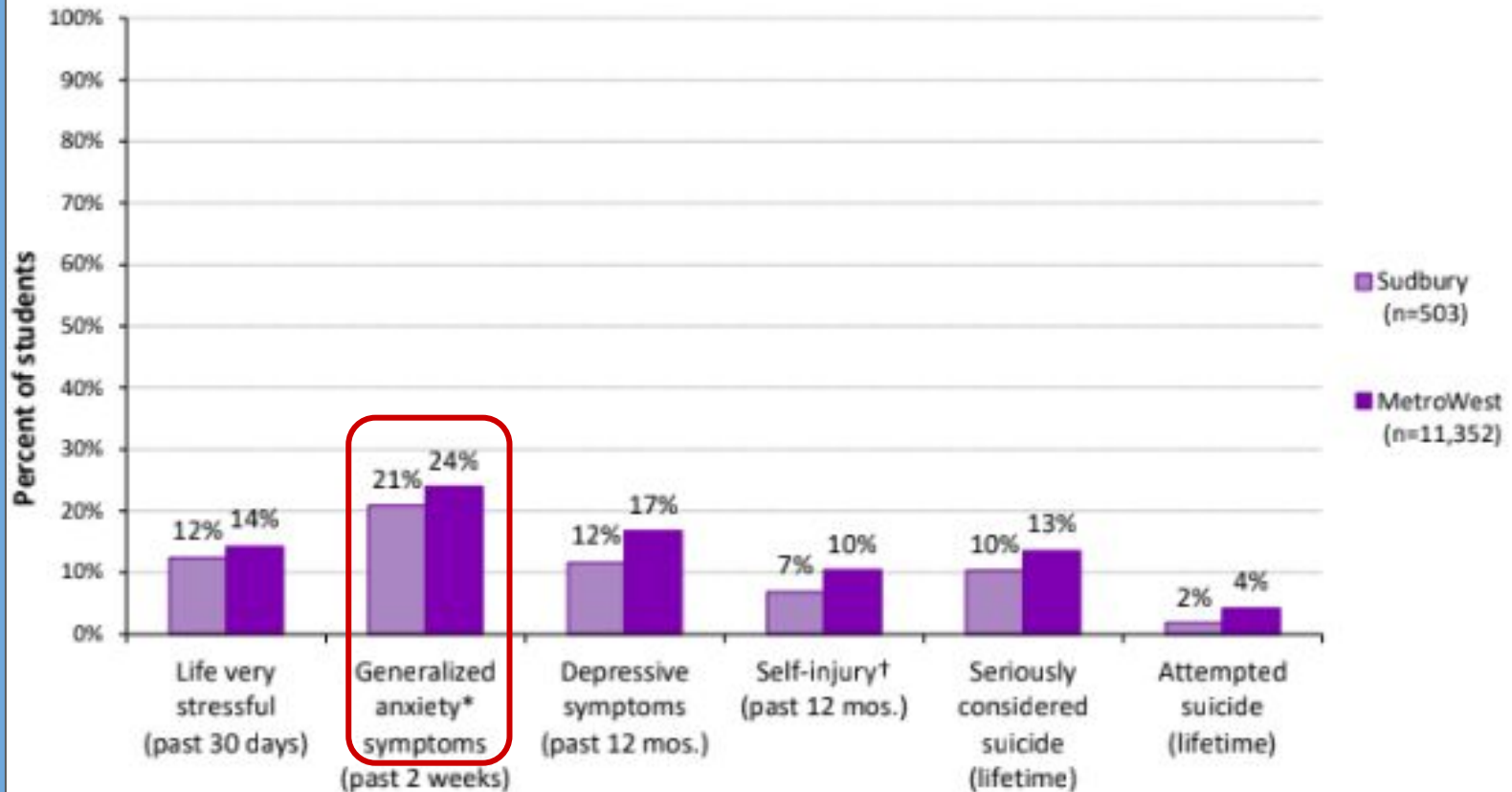
Mental Health & Suicidality Trends

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



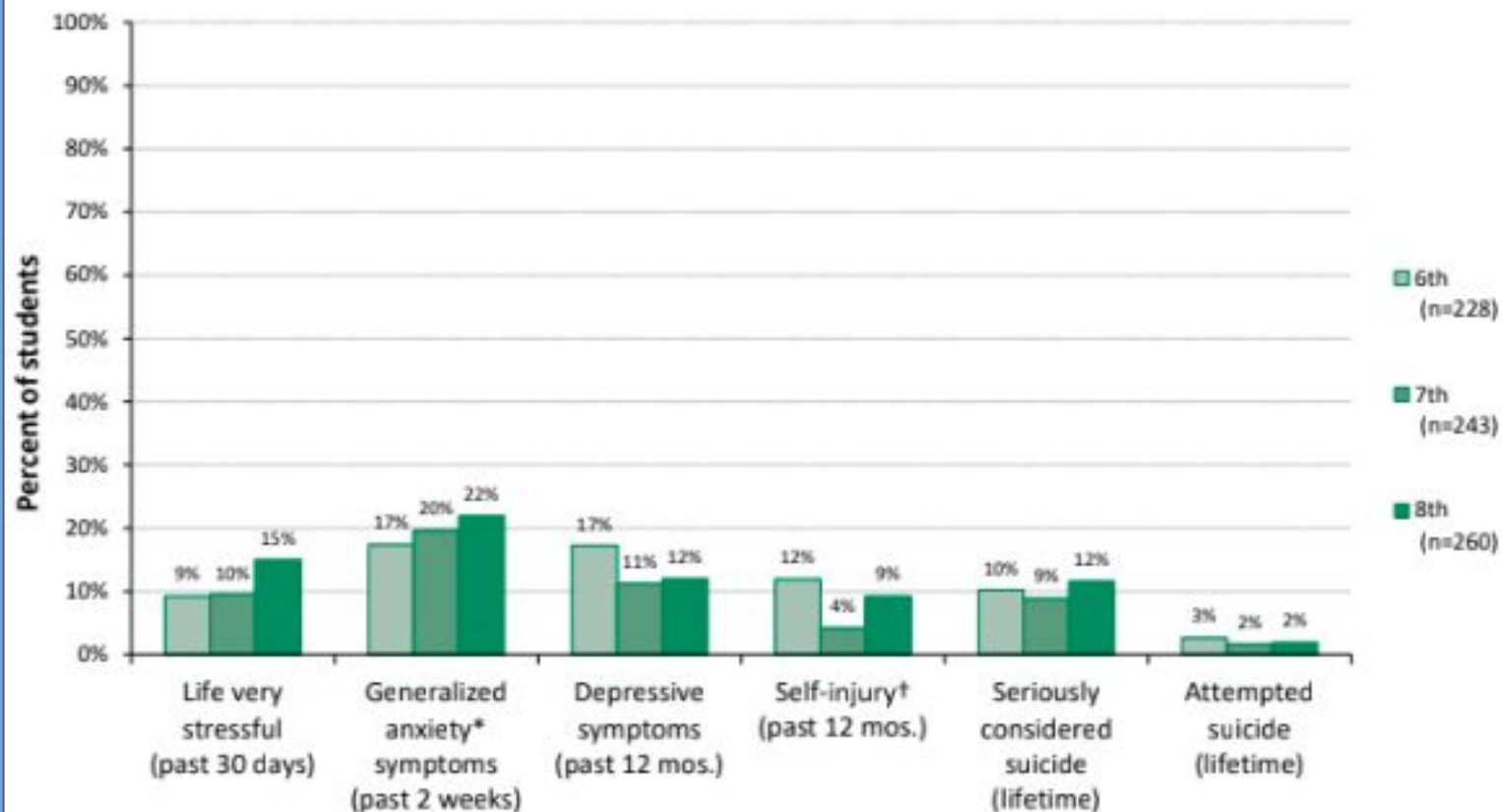
Mental Health & Suicidality District and Regional Levels

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



Mental Health & Suicidality by Grade

Curtis Grades 6 - 8 - November 2023



Mental Health

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023

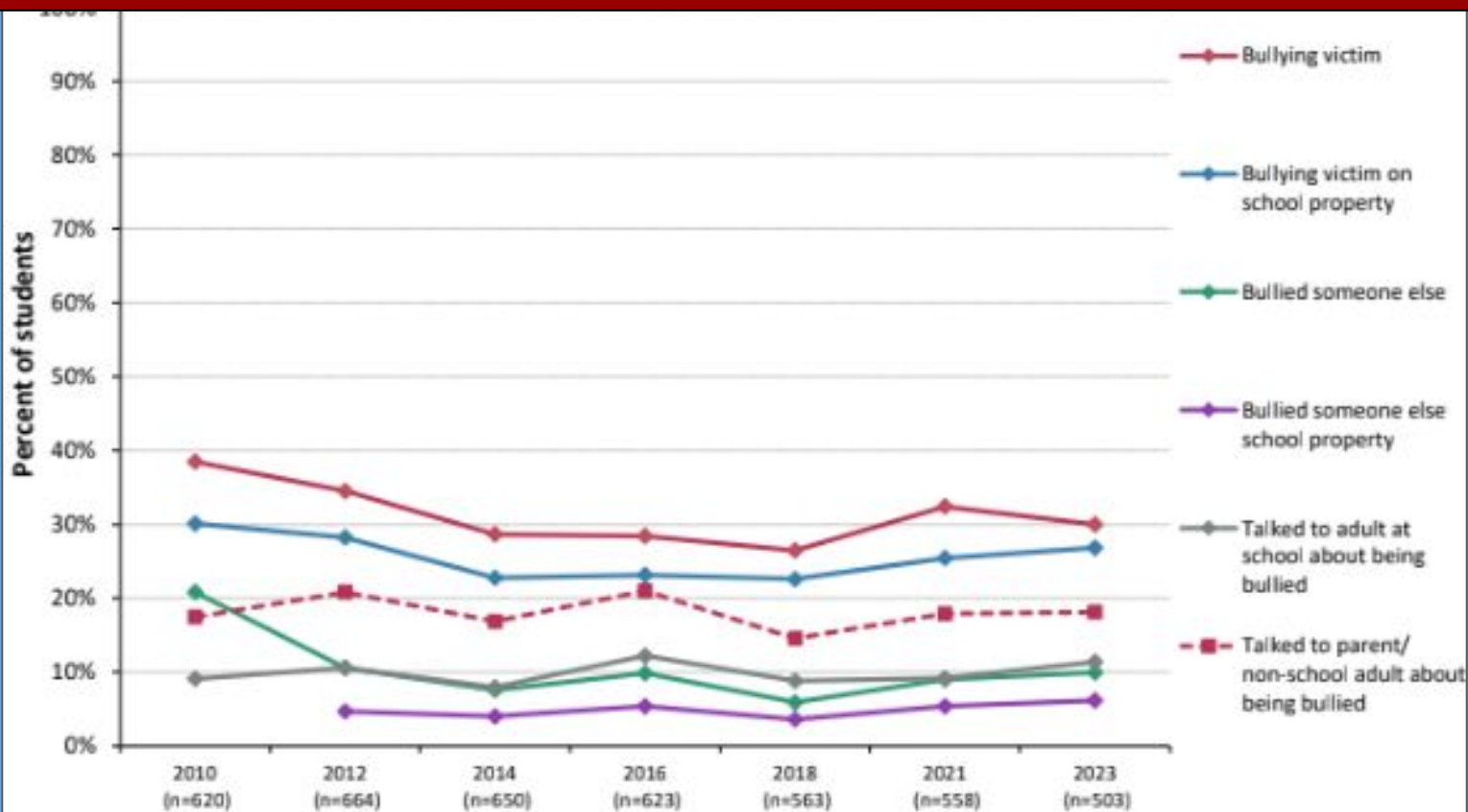
- School is the most common source of stress, reported by 48% of youth. Other sources include appearance (25%), social issues (25%), and physical or emotional health (15%).
- Females, youth who identify as LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities report higher levels of mental health challenges (*Regional pattern*)

Sources of Support for Curtis Students for Emotional Challenges

- 41% talked with a parent or other adult outside of school
- 33% talked to a friend
- 21% accessed a school counselor or psychologist
- 16% met with a therapist outside of school
- 11% used a crisis hotline or telehealth service
- 10% reached out to another adult at school
- 6% sought help from the school nurse

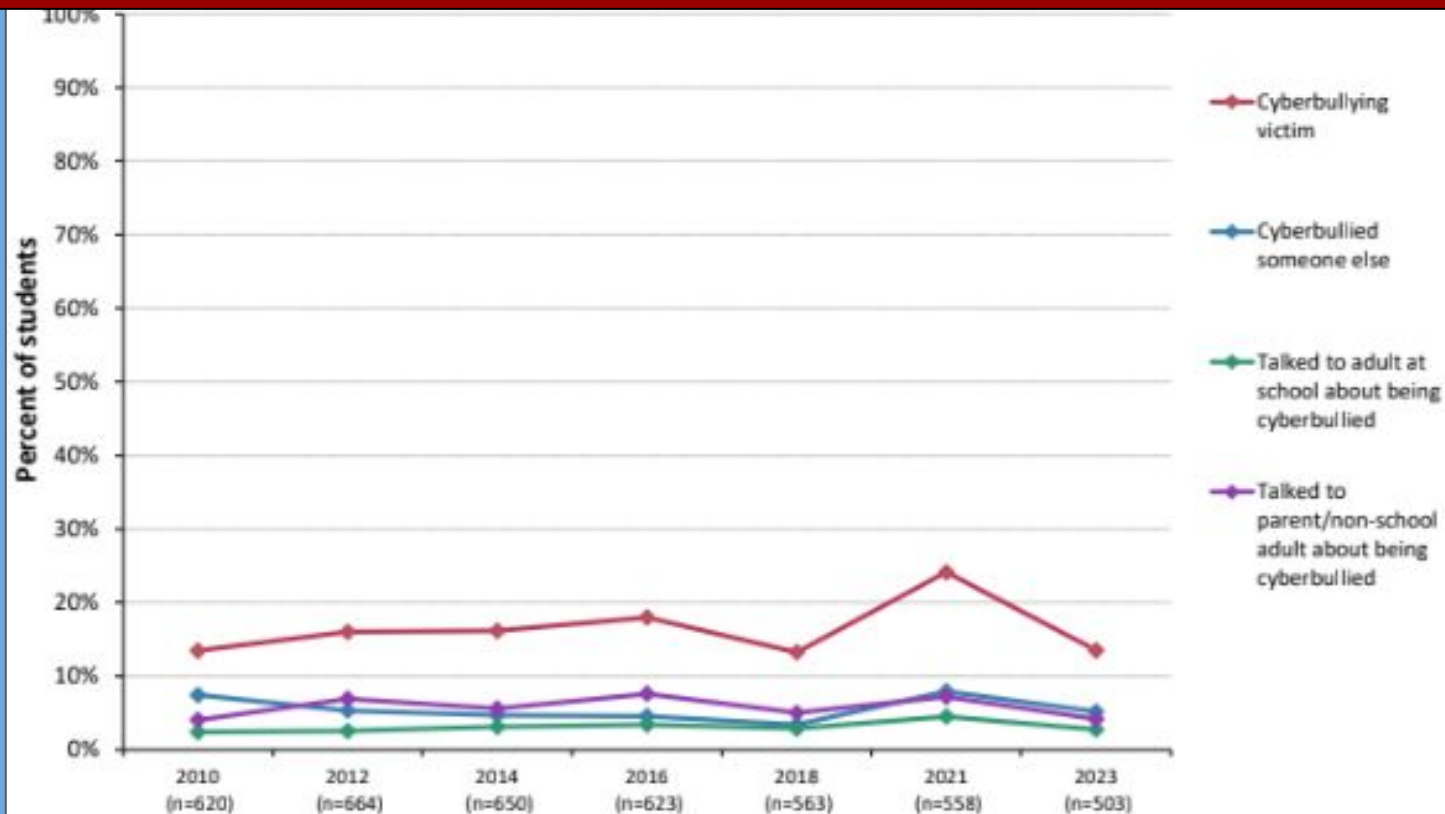
Bullying Trends

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



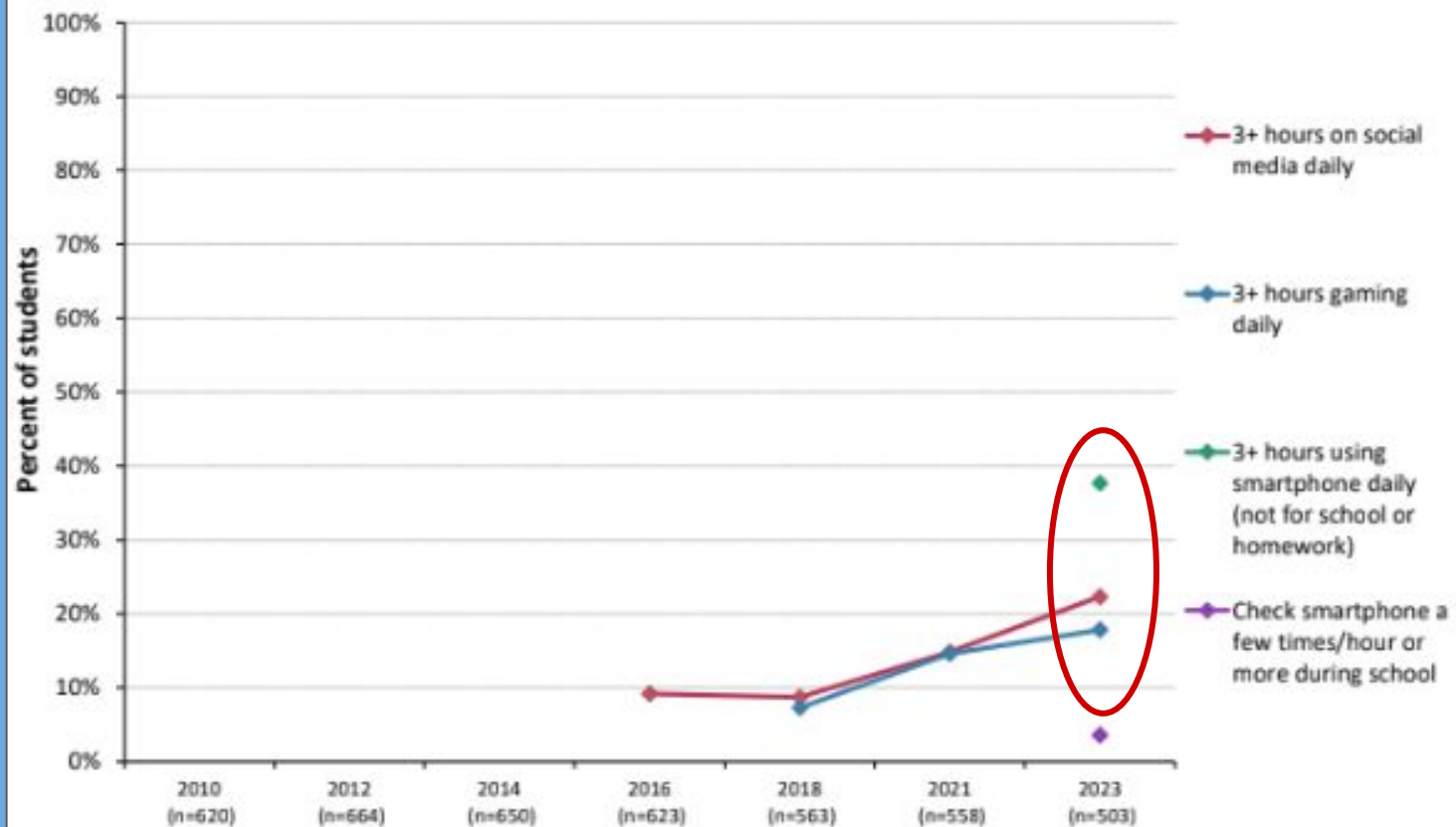
Cyberbullying Trends

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



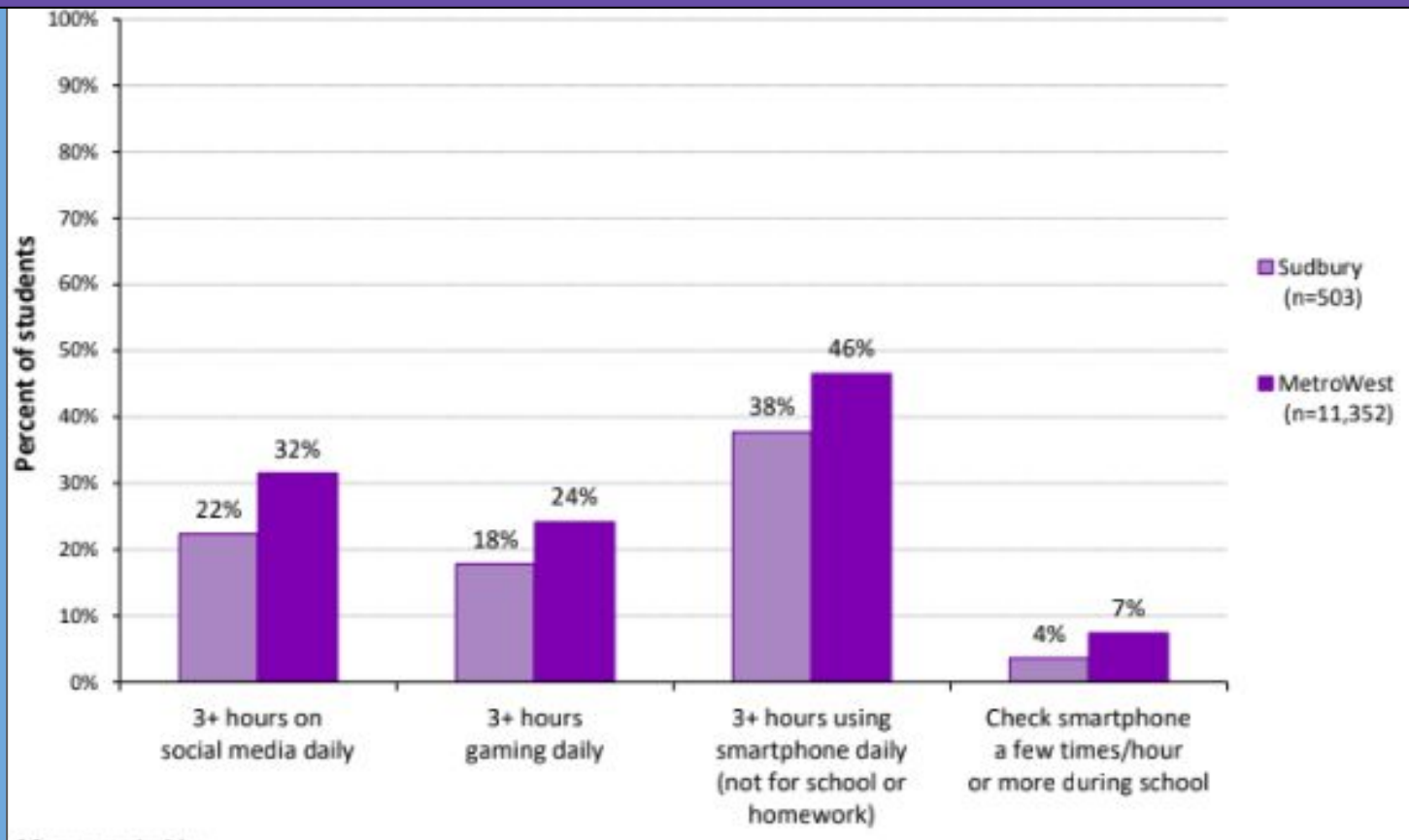
Time Spent Online

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



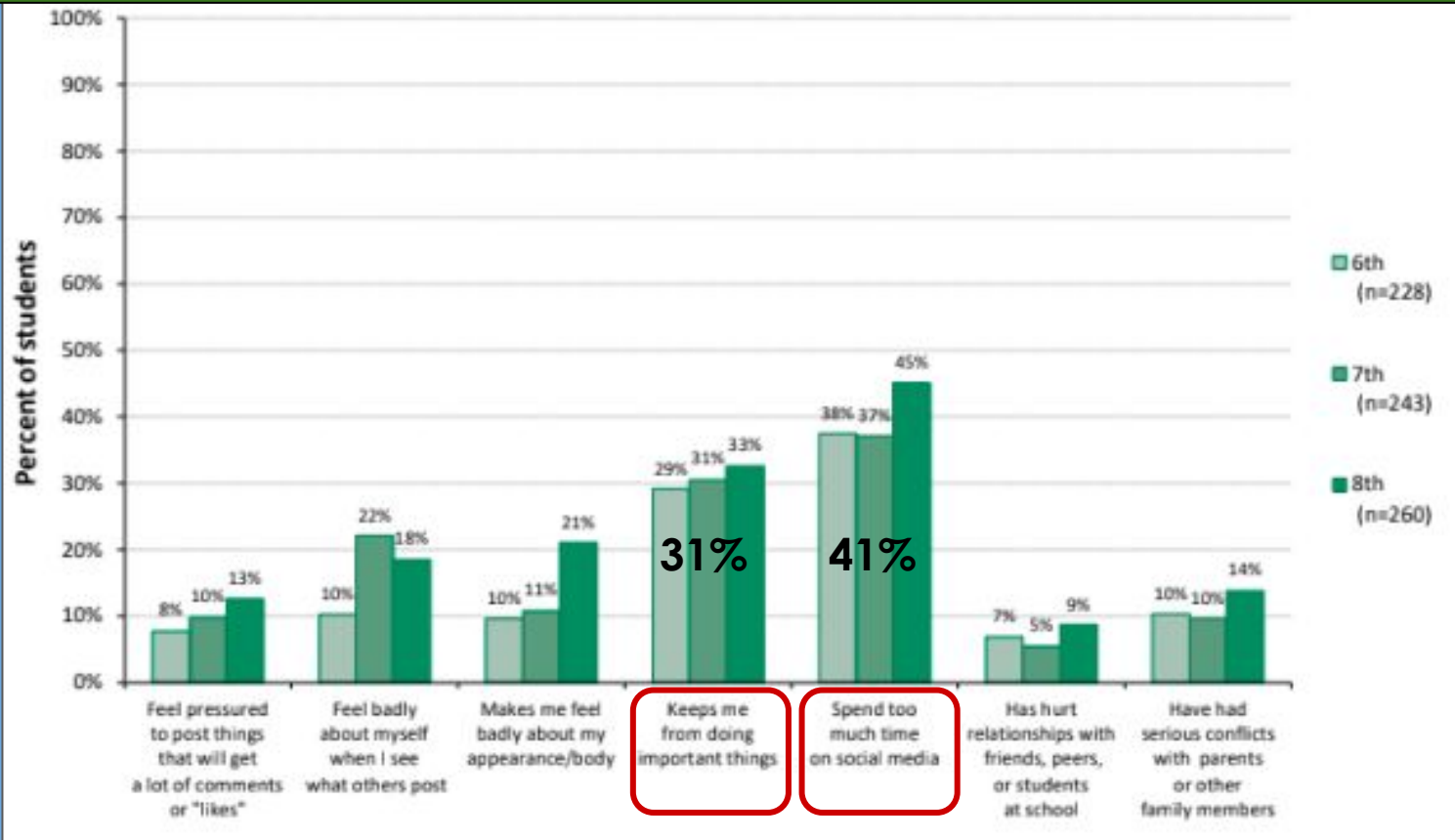
Time Spent Online at District and Regional Level

Curtis 7th & 8th Grade Students - November 2023



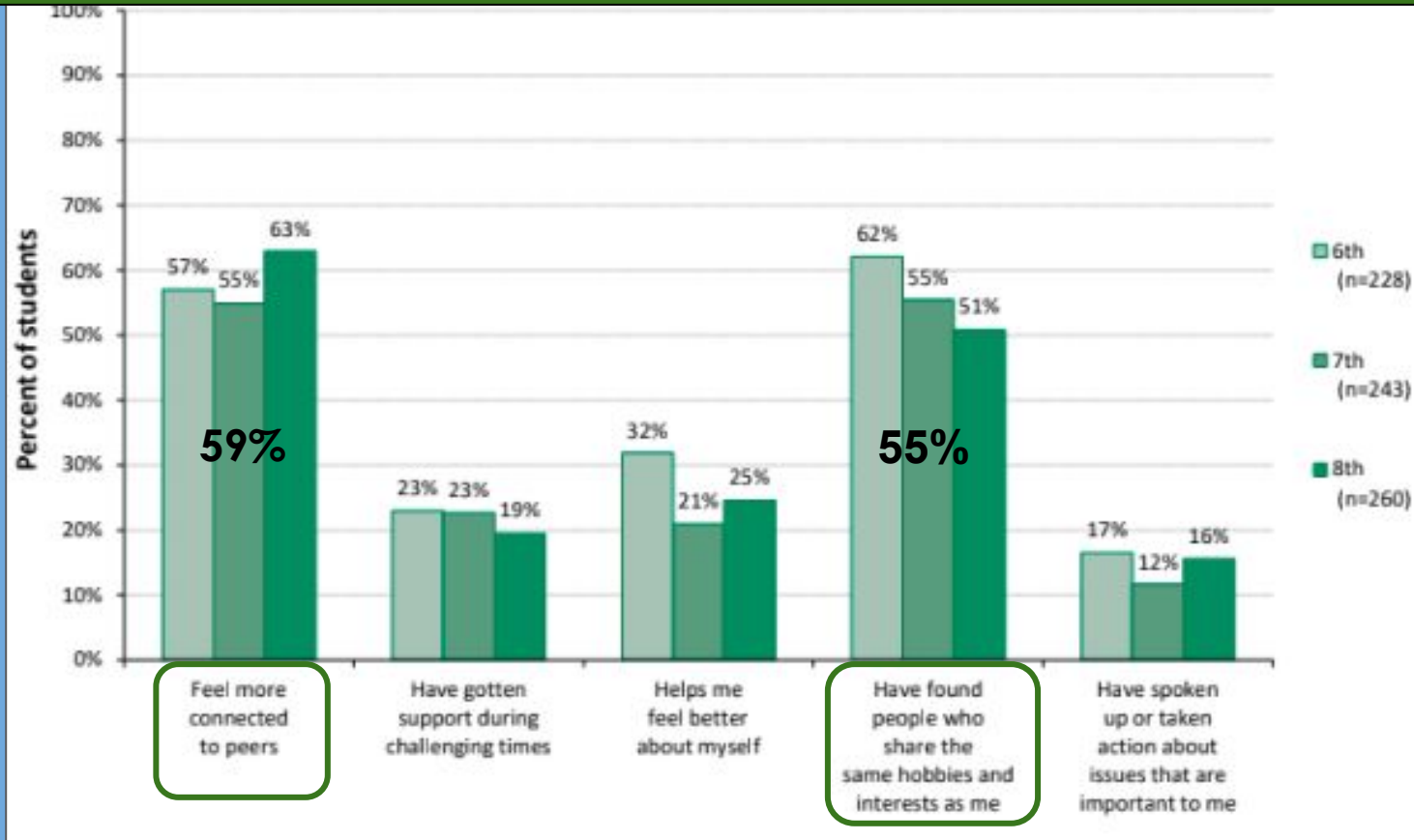
Negative Attitudes & Experiences Related to Social Media Use

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023



Positive Attitudes & Experiences Related to Social Media Use

Curtis 6th - 8th Grade Students - November 2023



How the results used in conjunction with other data ...

These data help us better understand adolescent health issues and serve as one of several measures used to identify community wellness priorities.

Specialized Programs and Actions

- Updated the Student Behavior Expectations and Adult Response charts.
- Rolled out the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System to staff, the community, and students in grades 4–8.
- Implemented Silent Mentoring, collecting feedback from students about whether they had at least one trusted adult at school.
- Host special events focused on priority issues, such as Digital Citizenship Week, Kindness Week, social norming activities, Unified Sports, and others.
- The annual Connectedness Survey will take place in January for students in grades 3–8 to gather insights about their school experience.

Strategic Actions

Universal Screenings

- Depression and Suicide: Conducted through a collaborative process involving Health educators and school counselors, with immediate follow-up and coordinated support.
- Substance Use: Screenings conducted by the clinical team.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Assessments: Completed by educators, with follow-up data meetings facilitated by school counselors.

Professional Learning

- Recognize the signs of anxiety, suicide, depression, and school safety topics.
- Navigate the DESSA-2 platform to support educators in understanding SEL data and making data-driven instructional decisions.
- Strengthen educators' capacity in foundational SEL practices, emphasizing the intentional close to foster optimistic thinking.

Strategic Actions

Developed New Curricula for Safe and Supportive Schools

- Mini-modules for students in grades 4 - 8 on school safety and reporting concerns to trusted adults as part of the Say Something program.
- Pilot: Disability awareness curriculum for learners in grades 3 - 5 to help foster a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- Disability awareness lessons integrated within the elementary library curriculum.

Curriculum Review to Respond to High-Priority Areas

- Promoting healthy tech habits in elementary and middle school students by revising the digital literacy curriculum scope and sequence.
- Middle school Health curriculum mapping to align to the new State and National learning standards.



Student well-being is not just about reducing risks — it's about creating an environment where every child feels supported, engaged, and valued.

By enhancing protective factors like trusted relationships, positive school culture, and meaningful opportunities for growth, we can help our students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Thank you for your dedication to this mission!