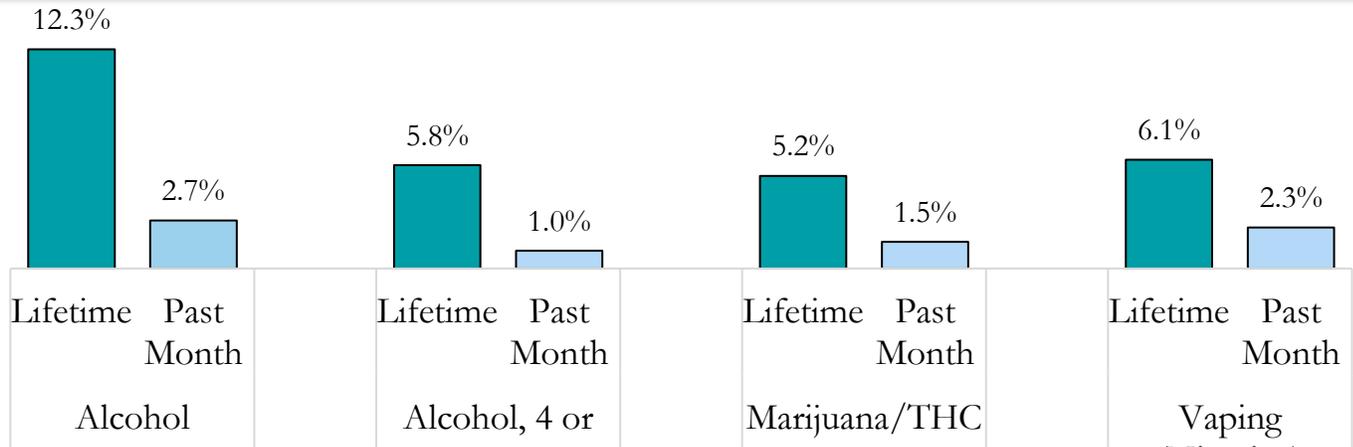




In April 2024, students from Ellington Public Schools, in grades 7-12, participated in the Youth Voices Count Survey on youth lifestyles, substance use, mental health, related risk and protective factors. The overall response rate was 81%.

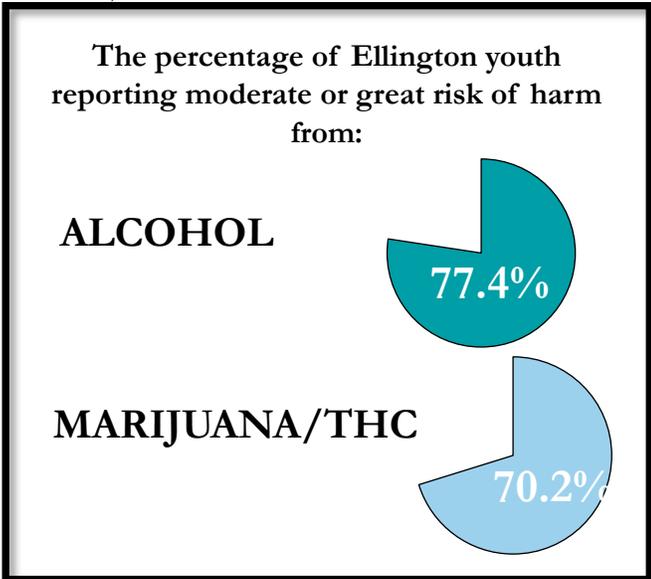
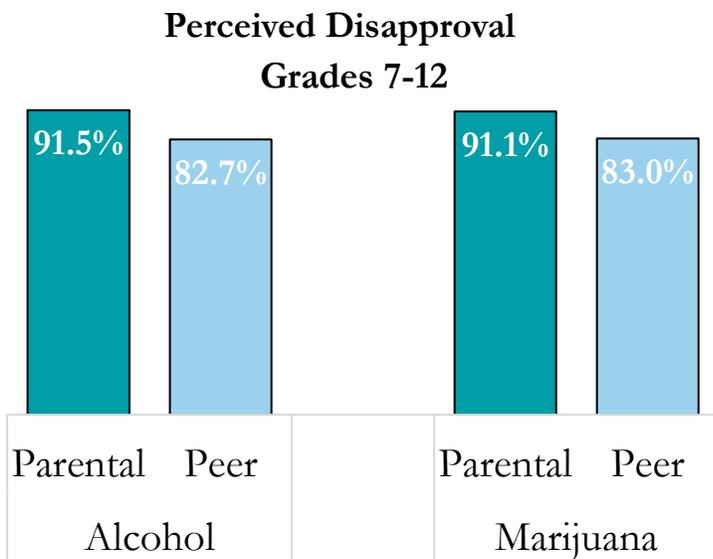
Alcohol remains the most frequently used substance in youths' lifetimes.



Youth in Ellington who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to have increased behavioral health concerns including anxiety, considering suicide in the past year and not knowing how to get help for mental health or substance use problems.

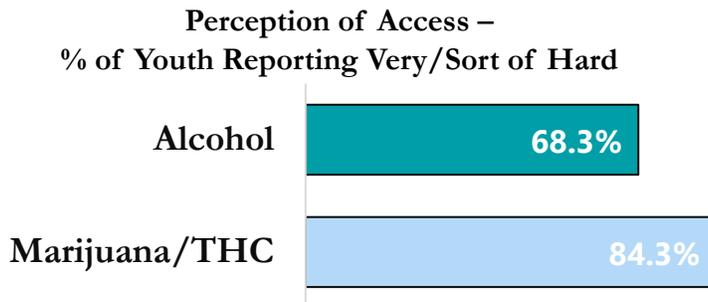
Risk Factors

Research shows that parents and peers are the leading influence on youths' decisions on whether to use substances or not. Below shows the percentage of youth reporting their parents or friends feel it is moderately or greatly wrong to use alcohol or marijuana.



Access

Ease of access to substances has been shown to have a significant relationship with youth substance use. The figure below reflects the percentage of youth reporting it is very or sort of hard to access substances.



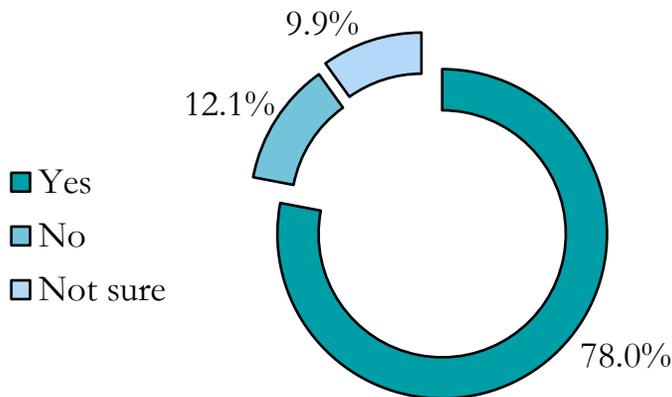
Ellington youth reported accessing **alcohol** most frequently from:

- Friends/peers
- Home with parents' permission
- Home without parents' permission

Marijuana was most frequently acquired from:

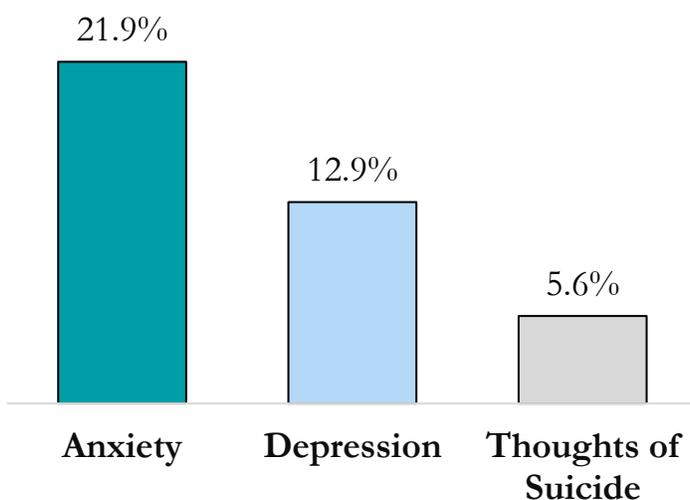
- Friends/peers
- Home without parents' permission
- Home with parents' permission

Perception of Clear Family Rules around Underage Drinking



78% of Ellington youth (grades 7-12) report clear family rules around alcohol use, compared to 87.2% around marijuana, and 89.2% around vaping.

Mental Health in the Past Year



21.9% of Ellington youth reported having anxiety in the past year “always” or “almost always.” Most frequent sources of stress and anxiety included academics, post-high school plans, and schedule.

12.9% of youth reported feeling sad or hopeless so much that it stopped them from doing usual activities 2 or more weeks in a row. 5.6% reported having considered suicide in the past year.