

Ellington

**Youth Voices Count
Survey Report, Spring 2024**

Grades 7-12



Survey May 2024, Reported June 2024

Survey Conducted by:

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C O N S U L T I N G

PROGRAM EVALUATION • GRANT PREPARATION • CAPACITY BUILDING

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Introduction

The following report is a summary of data that was gathered during April 2024 from public schools in Ellington for grades 7-8 and 9-12. Data collected from this year's student survey will be used in the planning and development of strategies, policies, and practices for the school district and community partners.

This survey was administered to youth enrolled in Ellington schools to ensure a representative sample and reliable data. Please note that the findings presented in this report are not reflective of the school but are intended to reflect the greater community of Ellington.

It is important to note that COVID-19 greatly disrupted lives beginning in March 2020, which may have ongoing impacts on youth substance use rates and mental health concerns.

The Youth Voices Count Survey fulfills the following objectives:

1. Describes youth's perceptions and experiences regarding substance use, mental health, school environment, social media and online gaming school environment, and other related behaviors among students in grades 7-12.
2. Utilizes information provided by youth, allowing leaders to systematically **"hear" from youth**, in order to enhance and **plan initiatives and activities for youth** in the community.

Youth Voices Count Survey Background:

The Youth Voices Count Survey (YVCS) is adapted from the "ERASE Student Survey" which originated out of the Governor's Prevention Initiative for Youth (GPIY) Student Survey, a school survey that was distributed throughout the State of Connecticut in 2000. Other survey influences include: The CT School Health Survey, The Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics (CPES) Young Adults Statewide Survey and most importantly, emerging issues for youth today—including vaping, online gaming, and social media related behaviors.

Youth Voices Count Survey is a product of B. Weyland Smith Consulting, LLC. Located in Wethersfield, CT. B. Weyland Smith Consulting researchers have over 50 years combined experience of survey and statistical research regarding youth behaviors, perspectives, and experience, specific to substance use, mental health and related risk and protective factors.

Youth Voices Count Survey was established with support of many youths and professionals in the field of survey development, program evaluation, internet safety and school mental health staff. They provided feedback through document review and focus groups.

The core elements of the YVCS are designed to understand youth's current substance use and mental health behaviors and perceptions. These data are aligned with Federal National Outcome Measures for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This allows for competitive grant applications and ongoing evaluation requirements to be met.

Topics assessed in the YVCS include: substance use, anxiety, depression, e-sports/online gaming, social media perspectives, gambling and accessing resources and supports in the community. Optional add-on topics include bullying/school climate, sexual behaviors, and electronic communications. In 2020 COVID impact questions were included as well.

Survey Methodology:

Survey Consent:

The Youth Voices Count Survey was administered in May 2024 to students at Ellington Public Schools. Students' guardians received e-mail letters notifying them of the purpose and content of the survey and were able to return a signed "passive consent" form to the school if they did not want their children to participate in the school survey. Guardians were provided with an opportunity to review the survey document.

Survey Administration:

All surveys were administered using SurveyMonkey.com website and software. Students received an email with the survey link and a link to a video including an overview of the survey, ensuring anonymity, resources if the survey brought up uncomfortable feelings and informing of their option to decline participation. Any question could be skipped if a student was not comfortable answering a question. Students who chose to not participate in the survey were asked to sit quietly until all classmates finished the survey.

Data Analysis:

Data Processing:

The student survey data was exported from the SurveyMonkey.com website and imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data analysis. A total of 7 surveys (0.8% of original sample of 911 surveys) were omitted from the sample pool due to lack of any responses other than demographics (5) or implausible responses (2). The final sample size after surveys were omitted was 904* surveys for grades 7-12.

*Two respondents chose an incorrect grade but were retained. They will not be included in middle or high school reporting but will be included in the totals.

Sample Response Rates:

Response rates by grade level are listed in the table below. Response rates are calculated as a proportion of the number of surveys included in the sample to the number of total students enrolled in the 2023-2024 school year. Note that total sample counts only contain surveys that were used in the survey report; surveys that were omitted from the sample pool are not included in the following counts. Responses from youth in grade 12 may underrepresent true values due to a lower response rate, however the confidence intervals on the following page can provide guidance on interpretation.

Sample Response Rates	Sample Count	Population Count	Response Rate (%)
Grade 7	167	186	89.78%
Grade 8	171	193	88.60%
Grade 9	167	190	87.89%
Grade 10	158	184	85.87%
Grade 11	135	175	77.14%
Grade 12	104	179	58.10%
Grades 7-8	338	379	89.18%
Grades 9-12	564	728	77.47%
Grades 7-12	902	1107	81.48%

The next table below shows the confidence intervals calculated for grades 7-8, 9-12 and 7-12, using a 95% confidence level. A confidence interval means the percentage range you can expect the accurate rates to fall within. Smaller confidence intervals give you more accurate estimates of the actual use rates in the school population (and larger confidence intervals give you less accurate estimates of the actual use rates in the school population).

For example, if 25% of your sample reported using alcohol in the past month, a confidence interval of 2.0 means that if you randomly re-sampled your population 100 times, 95 of those times you would find past month alcohol use rates to fall somewhere between 23% (25-2) and 27% (25+2). In contrast, if your confidence interval is 5 (and 25% of your sample reported using alcohol in the past month), you would typically find past month use rates ranging between 20% (25-5) and 30% (25+5) if you repeatedly re-sampled students in this population.

	Confidence Level	Confidence Interval
Grade 7-8	95.00%	1.76
Grades 9-12	95.00%	1.96
Grades 7-12	95.00%	1.4

Data Reporting:

The survey tool utilized several skip patterns to reduce the time spent on the survey for students, in addition, no question was required to be answered by respondents. Unless otherwise stated, data presented represent the percent of students responding to each question. However, survey response and completion rates are high enough for those questions to make strong estimates of the total population’s behavior and perceptions.

Survey Sample Demographics:

The student survey sample consisted of a total of 904 students (427 males, 474 females; 3 students did not specify their biological sex). Refer to the table below for more descriptions of the sample by grade level.

	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Total	167	171	167	158	135	104
Female	84	84	81	75	80	69
Male	82	86	85	83	55	35
Did not Identify	1	1	1	0	0	0

*Two students chose an erroneous grade and are not included in the table above.

Statistical Analyses:

Statistical comparisons by biological sex (male/female), race/ethnicity, and gender identity were conducted separately for grades 7-8 and grades 9-12 using the Chi-Square (χ^2) technique for key substance use measures (core GPRA measures for alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drug use, and gambling).

No statistical analyses for grade level differences in substance use will be included in this report, but substance use percentages by grade level will be included for core GPRA measures for alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drugs, and gambling.

Statistical Comparisons by Race:

We must be careful not to unfairly identify or stereotype a handful of students as using or misusing drugs, given the

smaller sample size within specific minority groups in these schools. As also done in the CDC’s YRBSS (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System) National Survey, we classified students exclusively as Hispanic or Latino even if they also selected being one or more of the races, such as African American, White, and/or the other category. Thus, the core race/ethnicity groups included in the statistical analyses for race differences were: White, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, or All Other Races (organized in table below by row color).

Race/Ethnicity Category	Grade 7-8	Grades 9 - 12	Grades 7-12
White	67.46%	70.74%	69.51%
Asian	10.95%	10.28%	10.53%
Hispanic or Latino	8.28%	10.11%	9.42%
Black or African American	6.21%	4.08%	4.88%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.37%	0.35%	1.11%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.18%	0.11%
Other (2 or more races selected or race not Hispanic)	3.25%	3.72%	3.55%
Not Specified	1.48%	0.53%	0.89%

For information regarding race and ethnicity differences in substance use, refer to the national survey reports, such as the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (<http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm>) or the Monitoring the Future Survey (<http://monitoringthefuture.org>).

Statistical Comparisons by Gender Identity:

In the interest of assessing how gender identity may impact youth behavioral health, analysis can be done to determine statistically significant differences among students identifying as the same gender as their biological sex (cisgender), and those that reported their gender as “non-binary,” “transgender,” or “I am not sure right now.” 26 students (2.88%) identified as non-binary, transgender, “I am not sure right now” (transgender, non-binary, or unsure) and 3 students (0.3%) chose not to identify their gender.

Gender Identity	
Male	417
Female	458
Non-binary	5
Transgender	7
I am not sure right now	14
Did not Identify	3

Equity, Disparities and Social Determinants of Health:

When evaluating statistically significant differences between population groups it is essential to consider historical, political, and cultural context with the intent of preventing the reinforcement of stereotypes. In the United States, minority groups have experienced discrimination leading to unequal access to resources (i.e. quality education, employment, and housing). Stigma is another driver of inequity, “because of its pervasiveness, its disruption of multiple life domains (e.g., resources, social relationships, and coping behaviors), and its corrosive impact on the health of populations, stigma should be considered alongside the other major organizing concepts for research on social determinants of population health.” (Hatzenbuehler ML et al. *Stigma as a fundamental cause of population health inequalities*. Am J Public Health. 2013 May)

Executive Summary:

Student Mental Wellbeing:

Anxiety: For grades 7-12, 21.9% of youth reported feelings of anxiety in the past year as occurring almost always (15.1%) and always (6.8%). 24.2% report feelings of anxiety making things difficult for them in their lives always or almost always.

Sources of Anxiety: For grades 7-8, the most reported sources of stress or worry in their lives are academics, schedule, and post-high school plans. For grades 9-12, this was academics, post high school plans, and schedule. For all grades, social media and financial security ranked as the lowest sources of anxiety among the provided choices.

Self-Harm: 14.6% of youth in grades 7-8 reported having thoughts of self-harm and 7.8% report having harmed themselves in the past year. For grades 9-12, 9% reported having thoughts of self-harm and 5.6% report having harmed themselves.

Depression: 13.9% of youth in grades 7-8 and 12.3% of youth in grades 9-12 reported having “felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row so much it stopped me from doing my usual activities.”

Suicidal Ideation in Past Year: 7.1% of youth in grades 7-8 and 4.7% of youth in grades 9-12 reported having considered attempting suicide within the past year.

Comfort Seeking Help: For grades 7-12, the source of help youth felt most comfortable seeking was parents (74.5%) and friends (59.3%).

Having a Trusted Adult: 94.1% of youth in grades 7-12 agreed with the statement, “I have at least one adult in my life that I can share my thoughts and feelings with.”

Community and School Safety: For grades 7-12, 91.6% of youth agreed with the statement, “I feel safe in my community” and 84.9% agree with the statement, “I feel safe at school.”

Gaming and Social Media:

Gaming Assets and Consequences: For grades 7-12, 45.7% of youth indicated that as a result of gaming they “felt more connected with others.” The most common negative consequence of gaming was “I did not complete my homework or study” (22.2%).

Social Media Assets and Consequences: For grades 7-12, 57.9% of youth indicated that as a result of social media they “felt more connected with others.” The most common negative consequences of social media were “I have had a hard time stopping” their social media use (34.6%) and “I heard or saw things my parents/guardians would think is inappropriate” (29.4%).

Substance Use and Gambling Rates:

Youth in Grades 7-8: Gambling products (8.6%) were most used in students’ lifetimes, followed by alcohol (8%), vape products with flavored liquids and vape products with nicotine tied with alcohol – 4 or more drinks (2.1%) and marijuana (1.5%). For past month use, alcohol and gambling products (.9%) were most used followed by vape products with nicotine (.6%) and vape products with flavored liquids (.3%).

Youth in Grades 9-12: Alcohol (14.9%) was most used in students’ lifetimes, followed by gambling products (11.3%), vape products with nicotine (8.3%), alcohol – 4 or more drinks (8%), vape products with flavored liquids (7.8%) and marijuana (7.4%). For past month use, alcohol (3.7%) was most used followed by vape products with nicotine (3.2%), marijuana tied with vape products with flavored liquids (2.5%), and gambling products (1.6%).

Substance Use Perceptions and Behaviors:

Perceived Risk: For grades 7-12, non-medical use of prescription drugs had the highest perceived risk followed by smoking cigarettes. For grades 7-12, using marijuana had the lowest perceived risk among substances.

Parent Disapproval: For grades 7-8, parental disapproval was highest for vaping nicotine and smoking cigarettes followed by using marijuana. For grades 9-12, parental disapproval was highest for prescription drug misuse and vaping nicotine followed by smoking cigarettes. For grades 7-8, parental disapproval of substance use was lowest for drinking alcohol, and for grades 9-12, it was lowest for marijuana.

Friend Disapproval: For grades 7-8, peer disapproval was highest for prescription drug misuse followed by using marijuana. For grades 9-12, peer disapproval was highest for prescription drug misuse followed by smoking cigarettes. For grades 7-8, peer disapproval was lowest for drinking alcohol followed by vaping nicotine. For grades 9-12, peer disapproval was lowest for vaping nicotine followed by marijuana.

Accessibility of Alcohol and Other Drugs-Perception of Ease of Access: For grades 7-8 and 9-12, alcohol was perceived as the easiest to obtain followed by vape products with nicotine. For grades 7-8 and 9-12, prescription drugs were perceived as the hardest to obtain followed by marijuana.

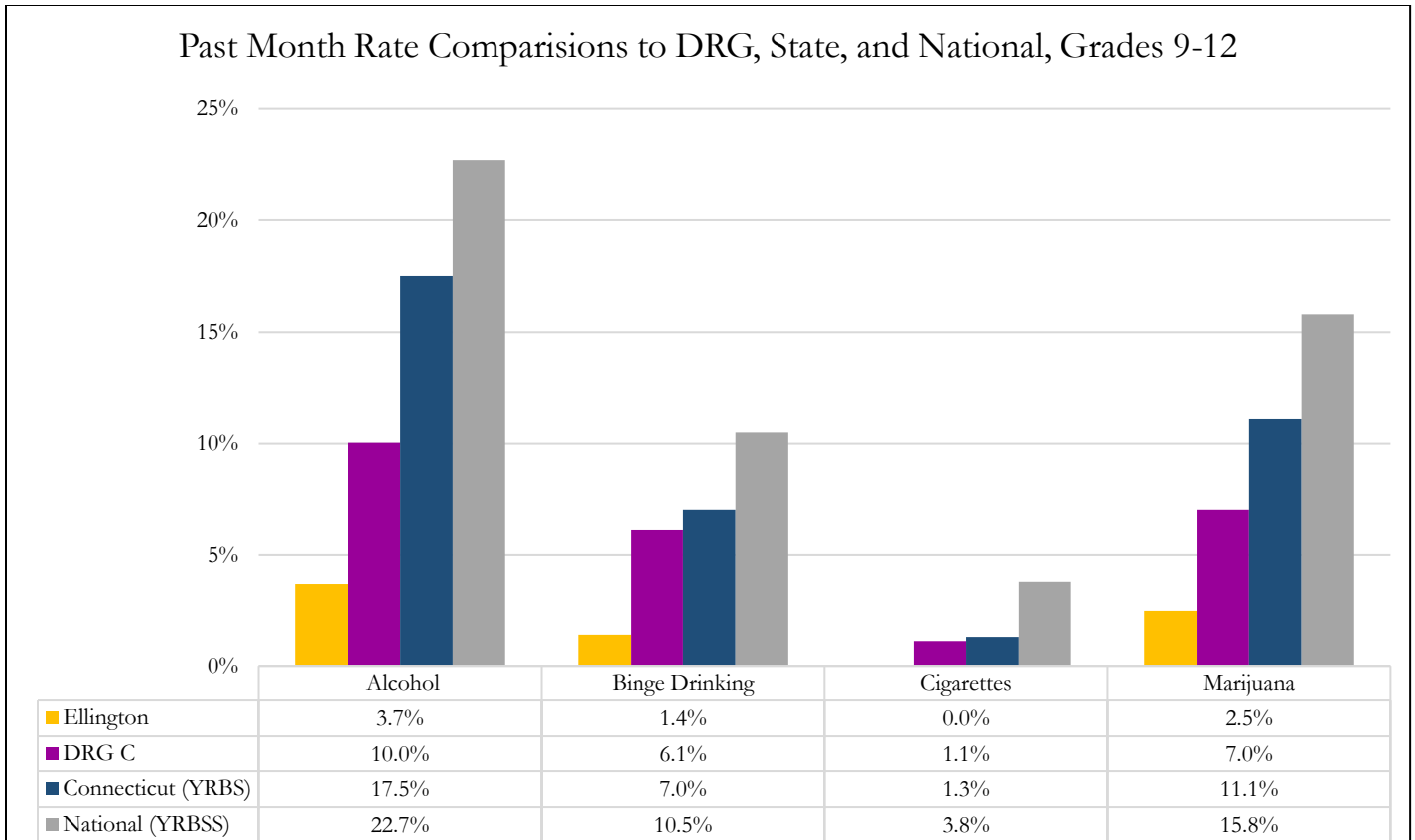
Accessibility of Alcohol and Other Drugs-Sources: Overall, students in grades 7-12 most often access vape products with nicotine, marijuana, and tobacco from friends/peers. Alcohol is most often accessed at home with parents' permission. Prescription drugs not for medical use are most often accessed on the internet.

Locations of Substance Use: Marijuana/THC and vape products are most often used "with friends, at my home or my friend's home." Alcohol is most often used "at home with my parent/guardian present." Prescription drugs not for medical use are most used "at home, alone."

Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Marijuana/THC: Among youth in grades 11-12, .4% report driving under the influence of marijuana and no youth reported driving under the influence of alcohol in the past month.

Other Substance Use: Of substances less commonly used the highest lifetime use rates for grades 7-12 were CBD products (3.5%), and inhalants (2%). Heroin/fentanyl was 0.3%, noted here due to community concerns regarding the opioid epidemic in our state and nation.

Past Month Rate Comparisons to DRG, State, and National, Grades 9-12



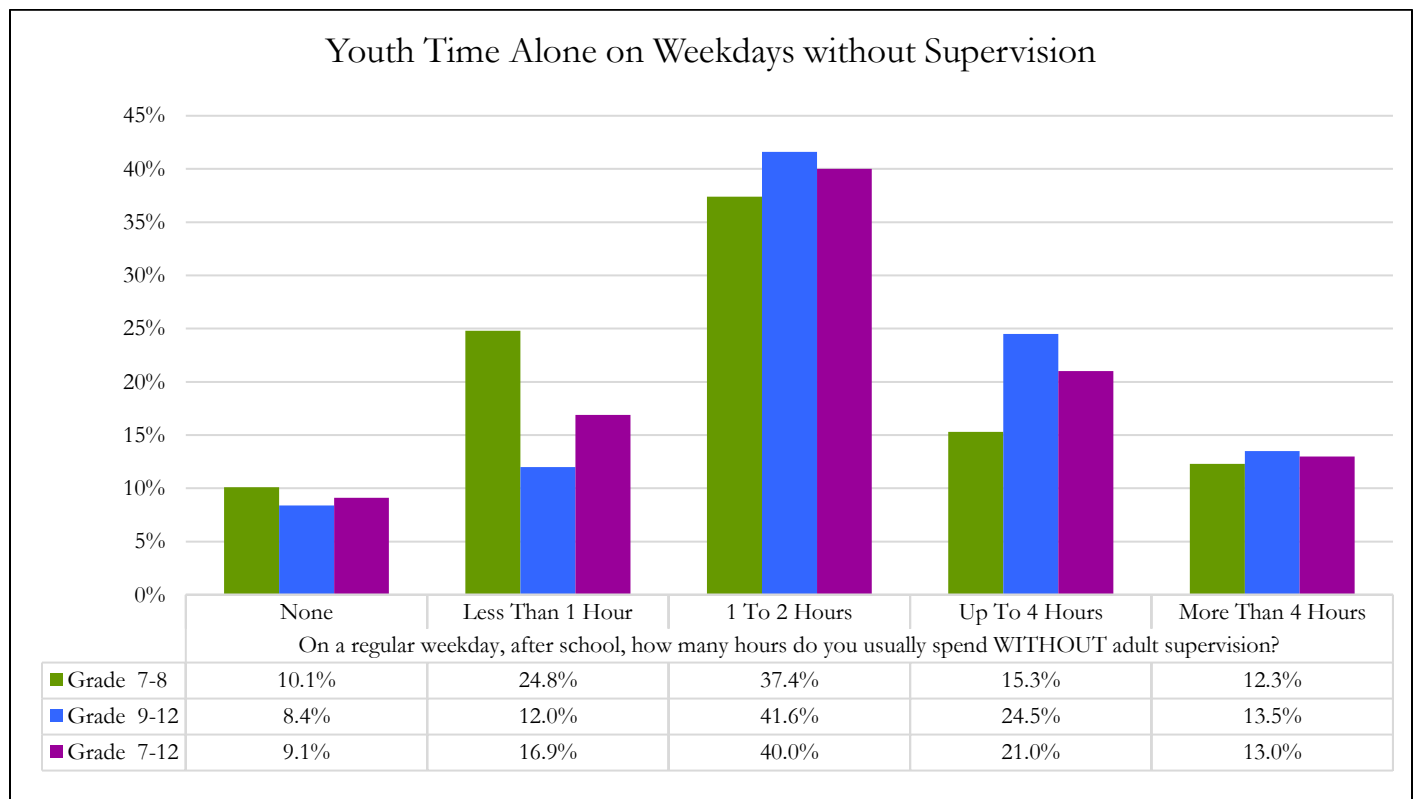
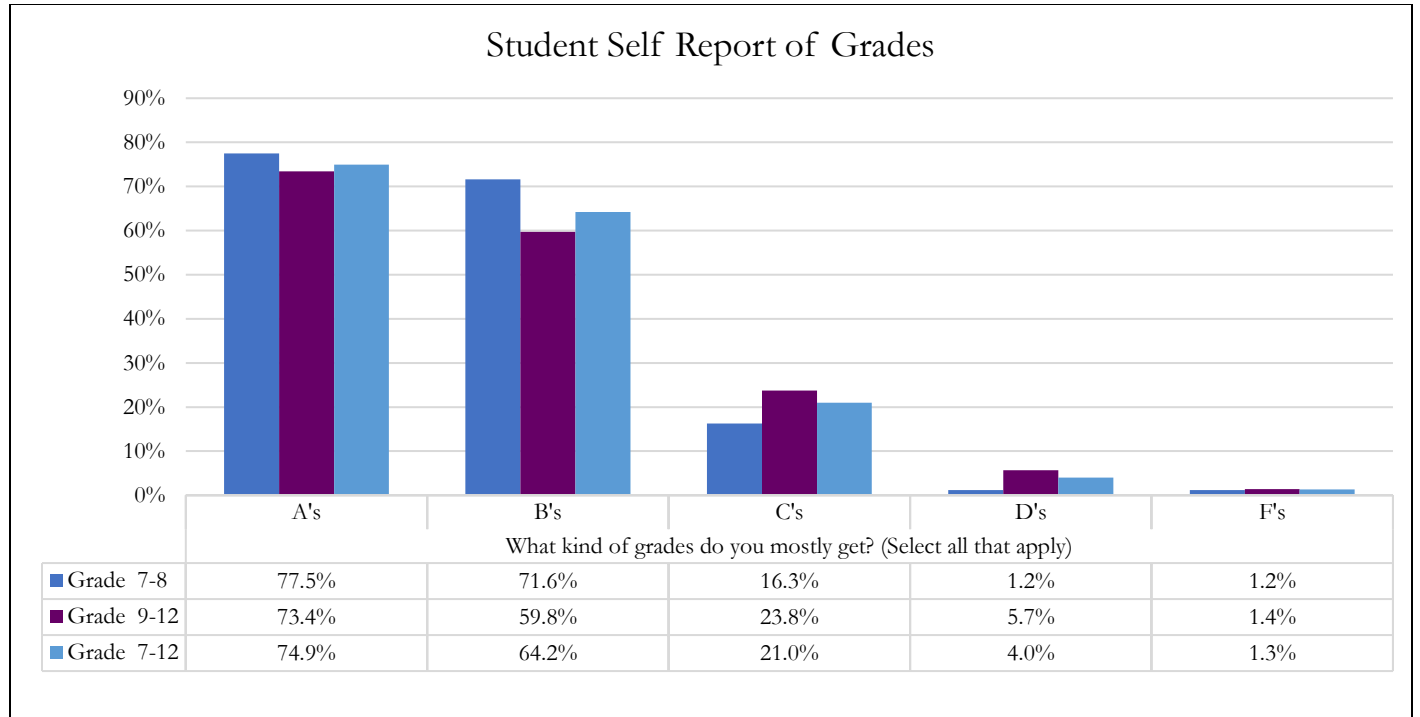
- It should be noted that YRBS and YRBSS data presented here is from 2021, the most recent year available.

-DRG reflects aggregated data from Youth Voices Count Surveys administered in communities within the same District Reference Group as Ellington. District Reference Groups come from the Connecticut State Department of Education and are a classification system grouping school districts with similar socioeconomic status and need in order to make comparisons. For more information, see the following: https://sdeportal.ct.gov/cedar/files/pdf/reports/db_drg_06_2006.pdf

Ellington Youth Voices Count Survey Report

For the following sections, tests for statistically significance difference were performed by biological sex, race and ethnicity, and gender identity for grades 7-8 and 9-12. Race was grouped into categories to allow for accurate statistical analysis and to ensure that students in race categories that represent a small number of students are not inadvertently identified. The categories are white, Asian, Hispanic, and All Other Races. Any statistically significant difference in these groups is noted under the chart it applies to and on pages 29 and 30 where a list of associations with substance use is provided. There are instances where significance testing indicates differences among categories, however they are less statistically reliable due to small numbers and thus are not reported here.

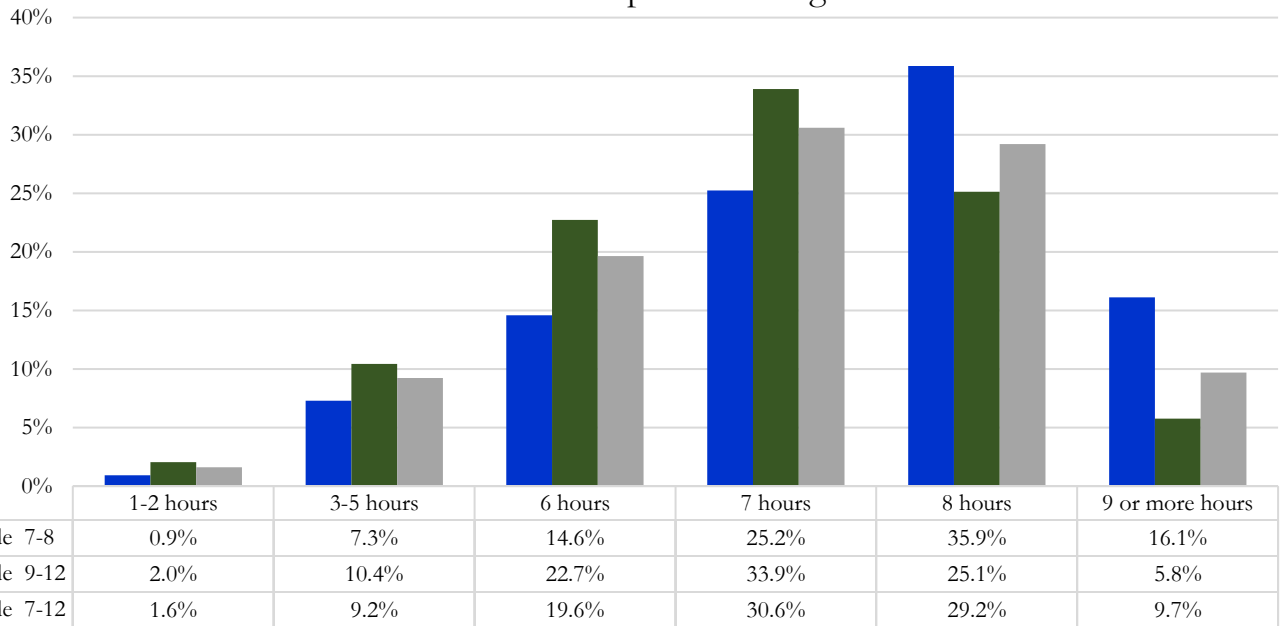
Youth Lifestyles:



*HS male youth 'spend more than 4 hours' unsupervised more than female youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth 'spend more than 4 hours' unsupervised more than cisgender youth.

Youth Hours of Sleep on Weeknights

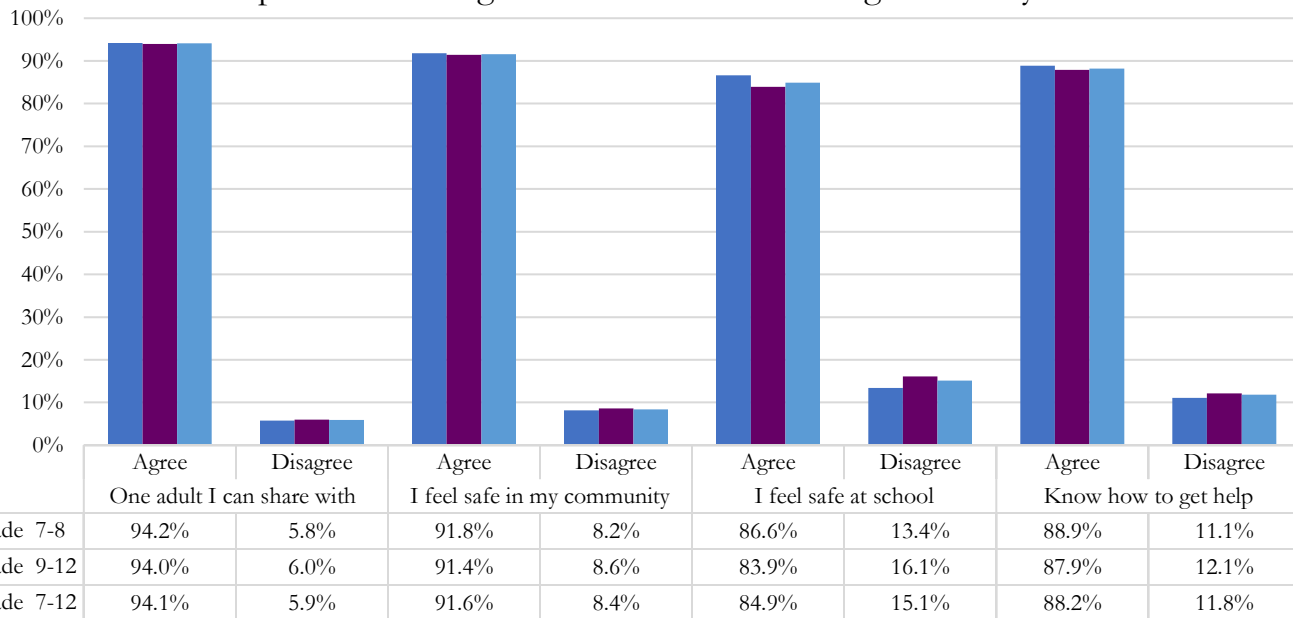


*HS female youth 'sleep 3-5 hours' more frequently than male youth.

*HS Hispanic youth 'sleep 1-2 hours' more frequently than white youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth 'sleep 1-2 hours' more frequently than cisgender youth.

Perception of Having Trusted Adult and Feelings of Safety



*HS female youth disagree that they feel safe at school more than male youth.

*MS Hispanic youth disagree that they feel safe in their community more than white youth.

*HS Asian youth disagree that they have at least one adult in their life that thoughts and feelings can be shared with more than white youth.

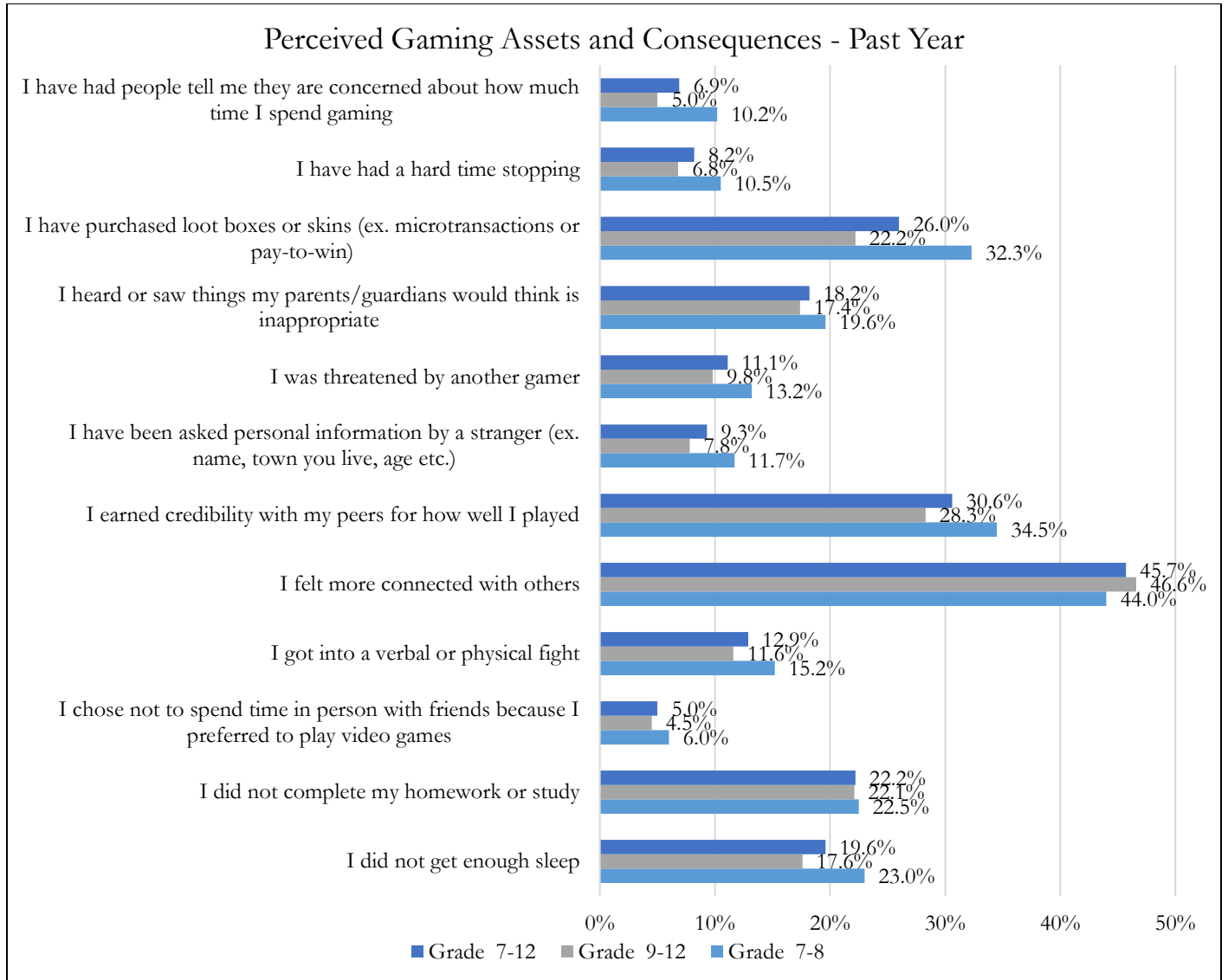
*HS Hispanic youth disagree that they feel safe at school more than Asian youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth disagree that they feel safe at school more than cisgender youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth disagree that they feel safe in their community more than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth disagree that they have at least one adult in their life that thoughts and feelings can be shared with more than cisgender youth.

Gaming:



*MS and HS male youth agree that they got into a verbal or physical fight, felt more connected with others, earned credibility with their peers for how well they played, been asked personal info by a stranger, were threatened, have had people voice concern about amount of time spent gaming, or have purchased loot boxes or skins more than female youth.

*MS male youth agree that they chose to play video games instead of spending time in person with friends more than female youth.

*HS male youth agree that they did not get enough sleep, did not complete their homework or study, heard or saw things their parents/guardians would think is inappropriate, or have had a hard time stopping gaming more than female youth.

*MS all other races group youth agree that they earned credibility with their peers for how well they played more than white youth.

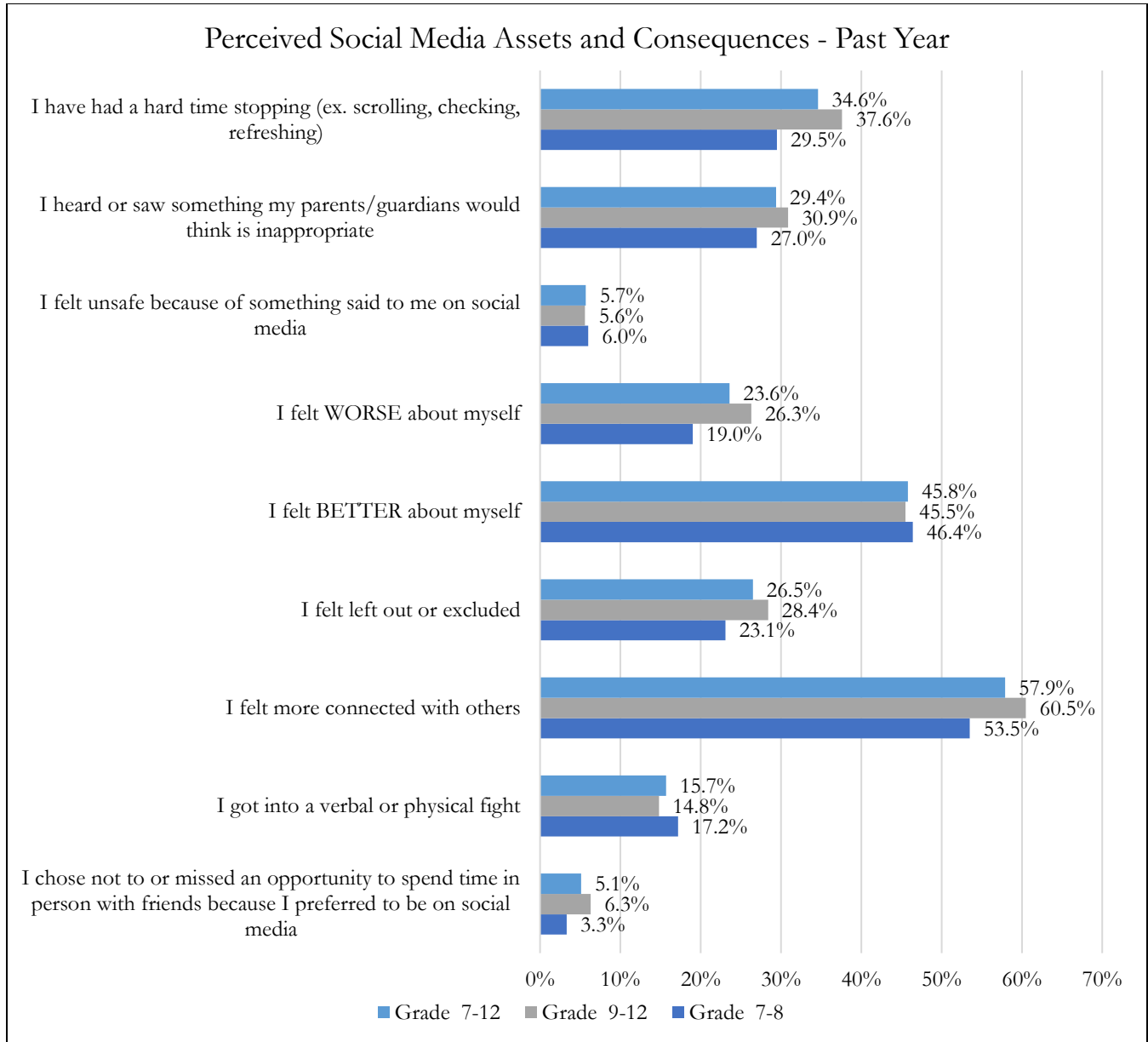
*MS Hispanic youth agree they were threatened by another gamer more than white youth.

*HS Hispanic youth agree that they got into a verbal or physical fight more than white youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth agree that they did not get enough sleep, been asked personal info, heard or saw things their parents/guardians would think is inappropriate, or had people voice concern about amount of time spent gaming more than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth agree that they did not complete their homework or study, chose to play video games instead of spending time in person with friends, got into a verbal or physical fight, earned credibility with their peers, were threatened by another gamer, have purchased loot boxes or skins, or have had a hard time stopping more than cisgender youth.

Social Media:



*MS and HS female youth agree that they felt excluded, felt worse about themselves, or have had a hard time stopping social media more than male youth.

*HS female youth agree that they felt more connected with others more than male youth.

*MS all other races group youth agree that they felt better about themselves more than white youth.

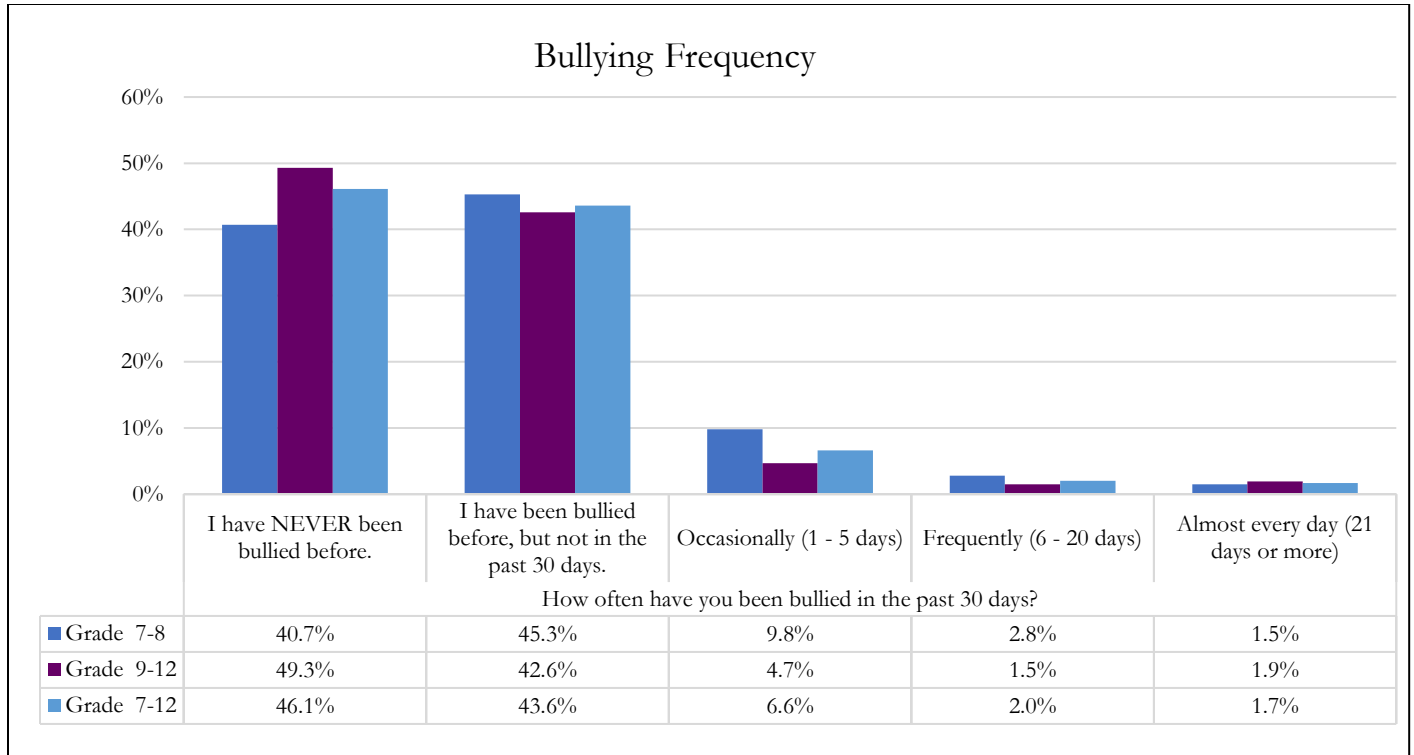
*HS Asian youth agree that they felt more connected with others more than Hispanic or all other races youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth agree that they felt unsafe more than cisgender youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth agree that they have had a hard time stopping social media more than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth agree that they chose social media instead of spending time in person with friends or got into a verbal/physical fight more than cisgender youth.

Bullying:

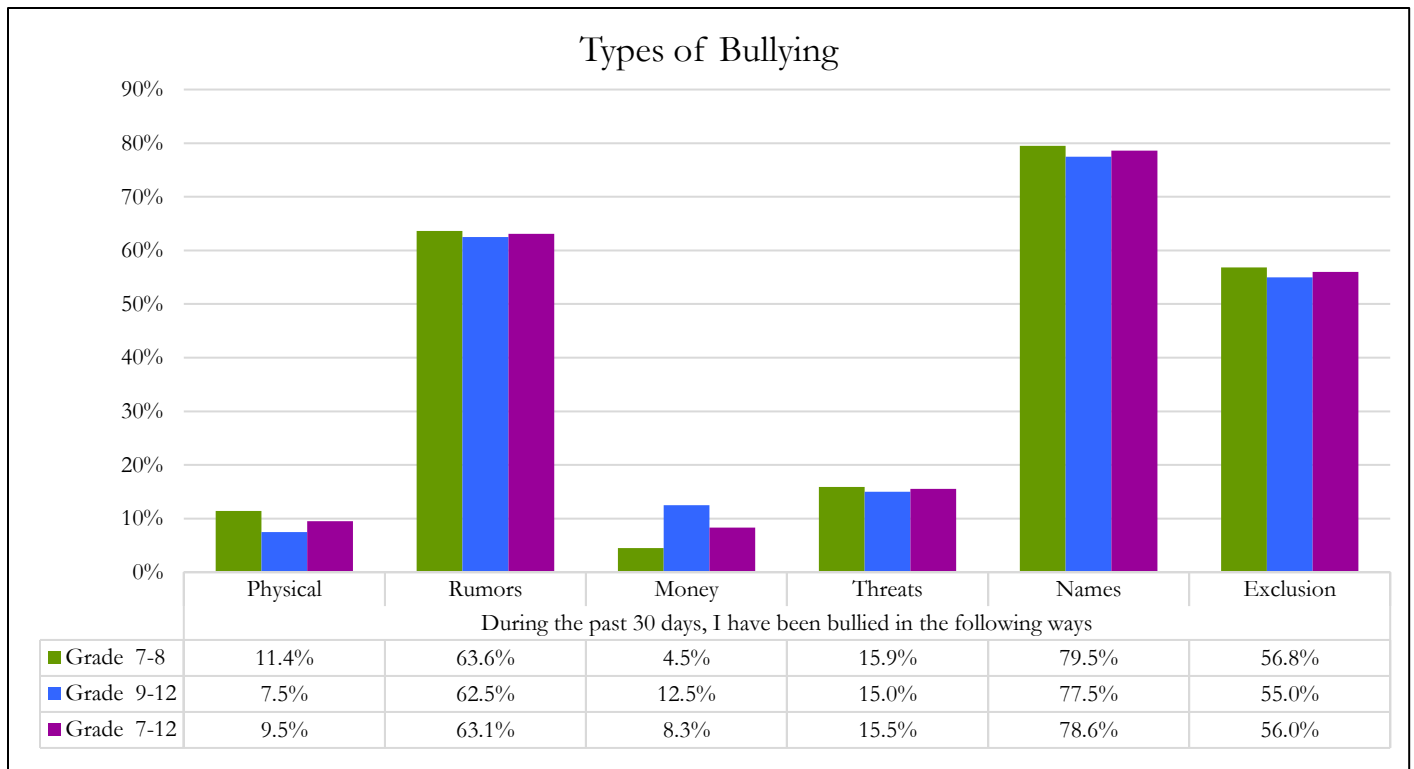


*MS and HS female youth have been bullied in their lifetime more than male youth.

*MS male youth have never been bullied more than female youth.

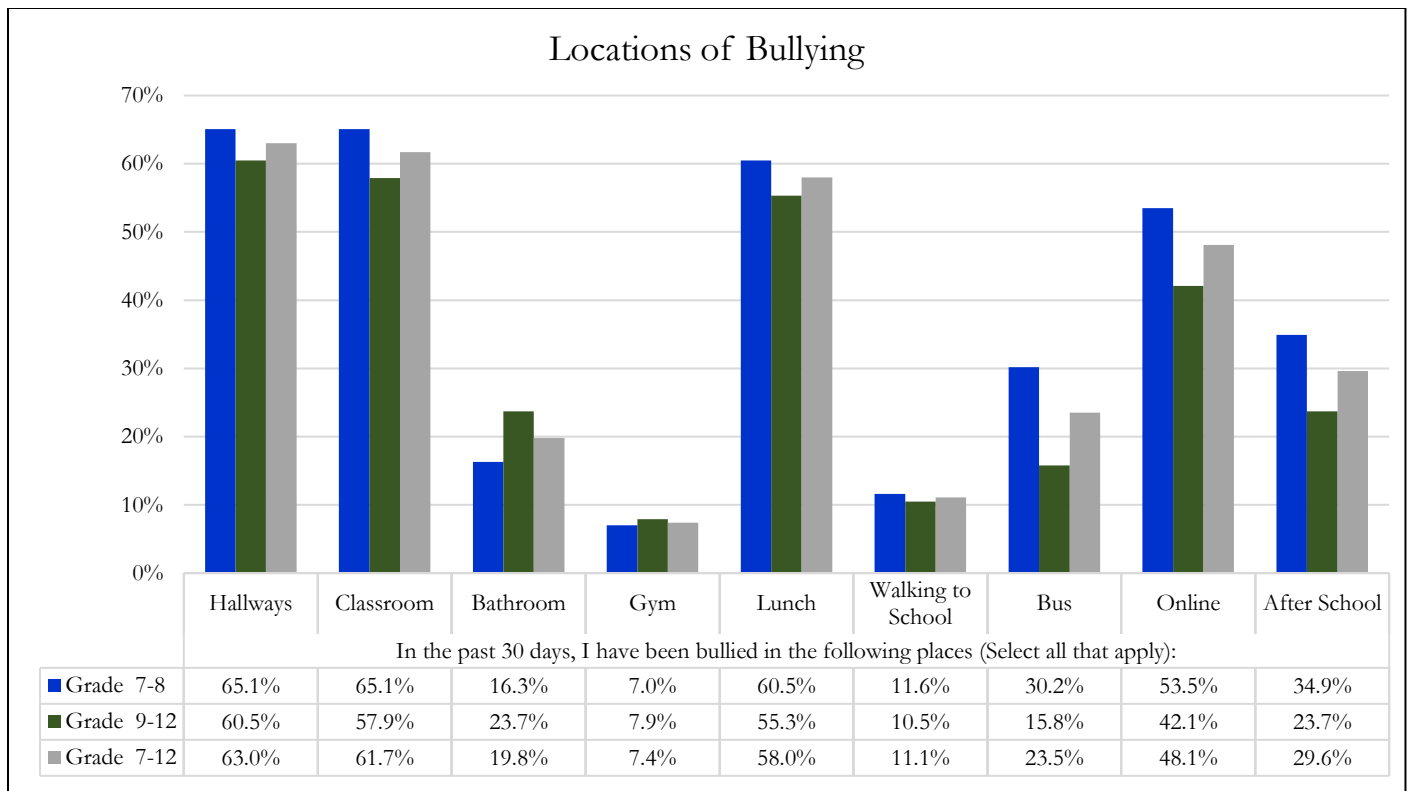
*HS male youth 'have been bullied almost every day (21 days or more)' more than female youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth 'have been bullied almost every day (21 days or more)' more than cisgender youth.



*HS all other races group youth have had money or property or been threatened more than white youth.

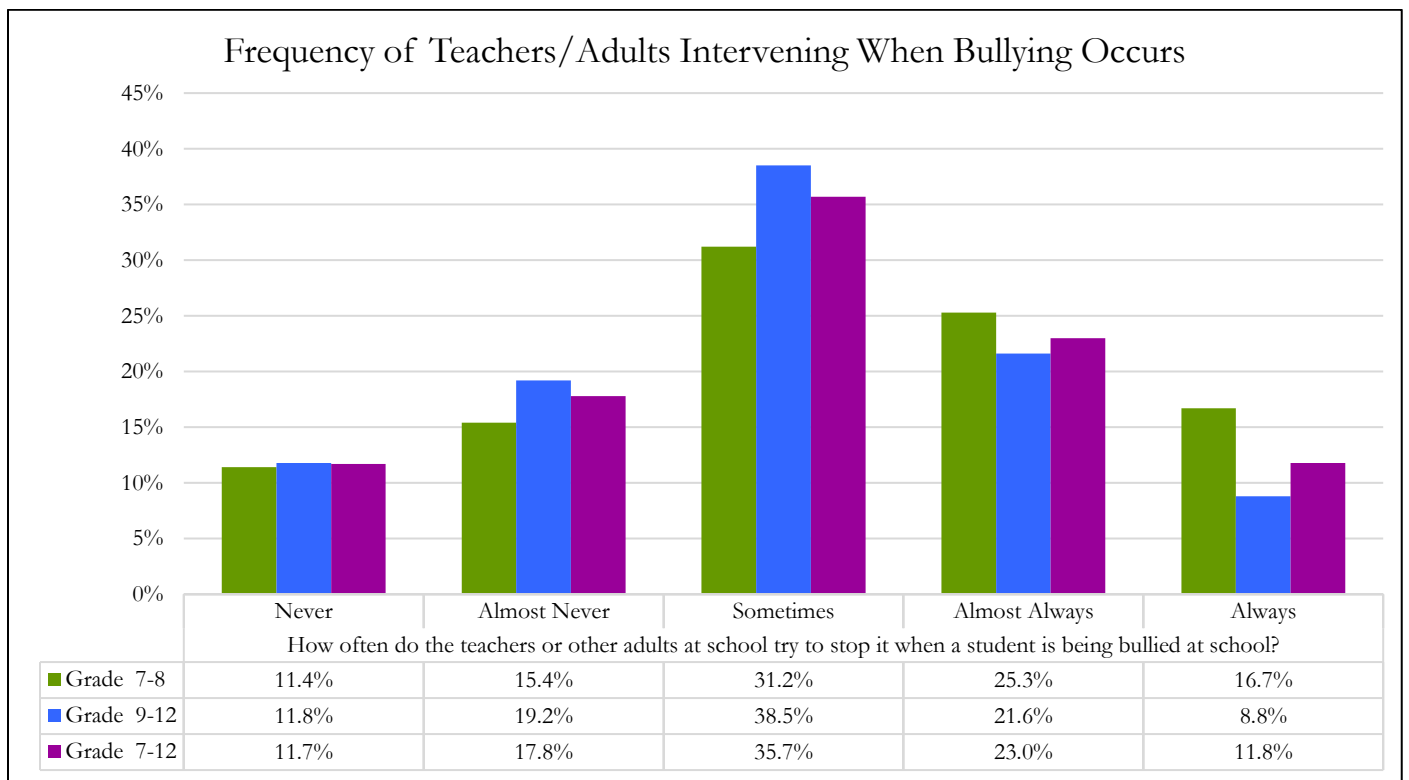
*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have had money or property taken more than cisgender youth.



*MS and HS female youth 'have been bullied online or through text messaging' more than male youth.

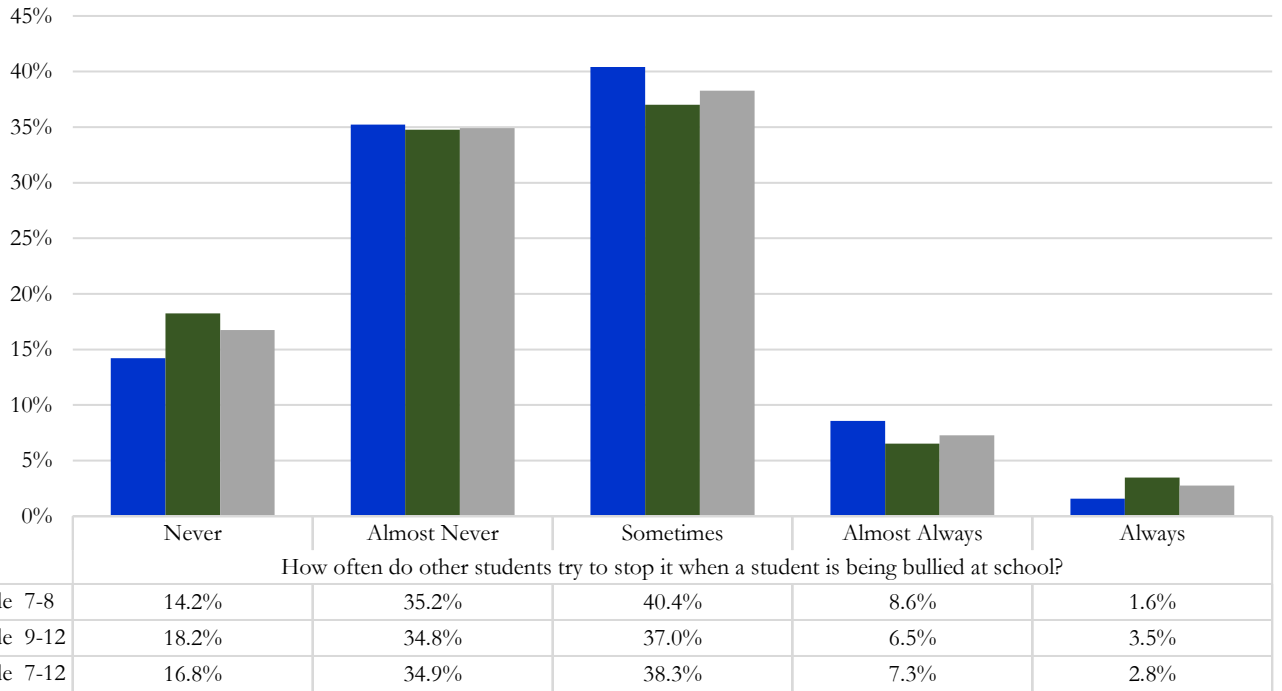
*HS all other races group youth have been bullied on the school bus more than white youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth 'have been bullied on the school bus more than cisgender youth.



*MS male youth have 'never' had adults prevent bullying more frequently than female youth.

Frequency of Students Intervening When Bullying Occurs

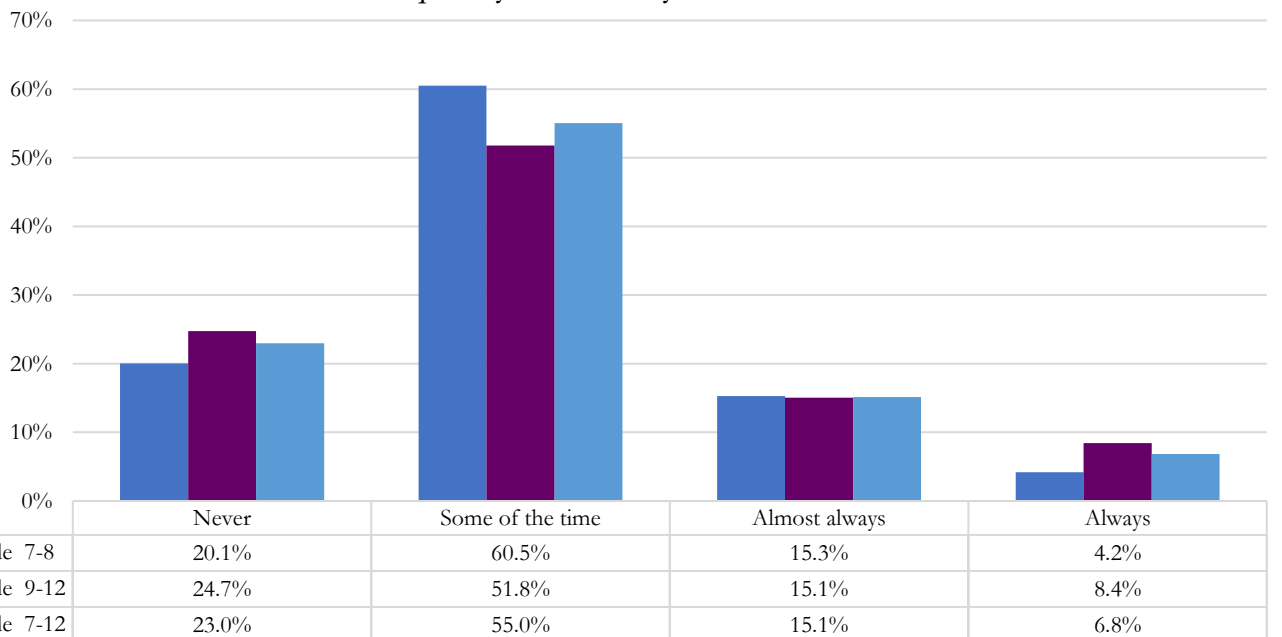


*HS Hispanic youth have 'never' had other students prevent bullying more frequently than white or Asian youth.

*HS all other races group youth have 'never' had other students prevent bullying more frequently than Asian youth.

Emotional Health:

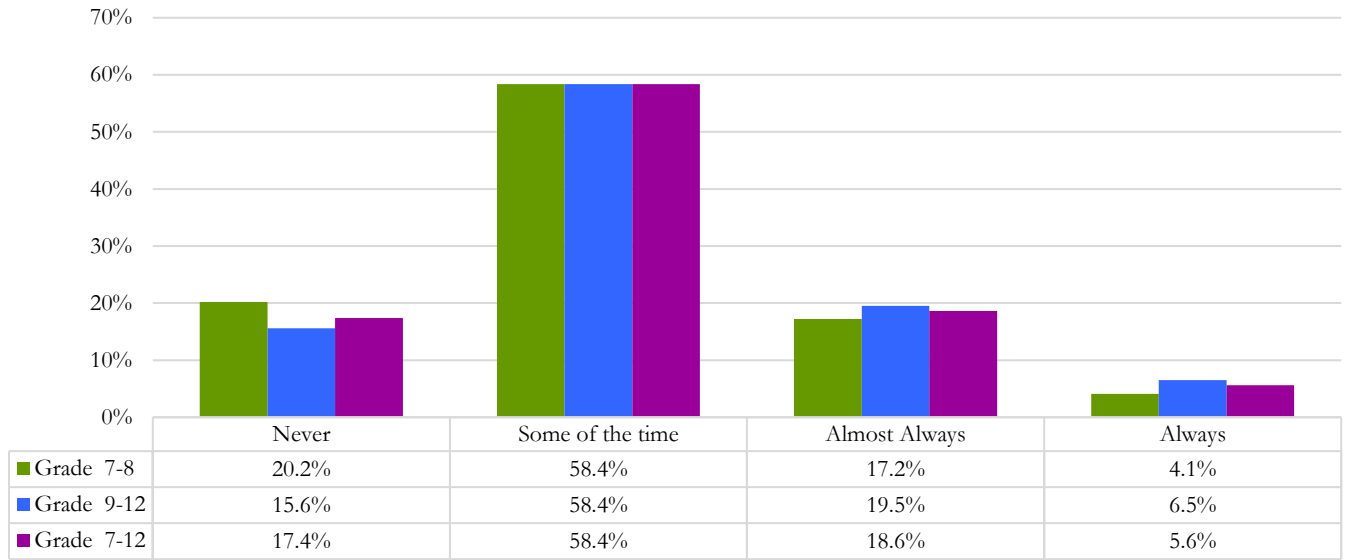
Frequency of Anxiety-Past Year



*MS and HS female youth reported always feeling anxiety more than male youth.

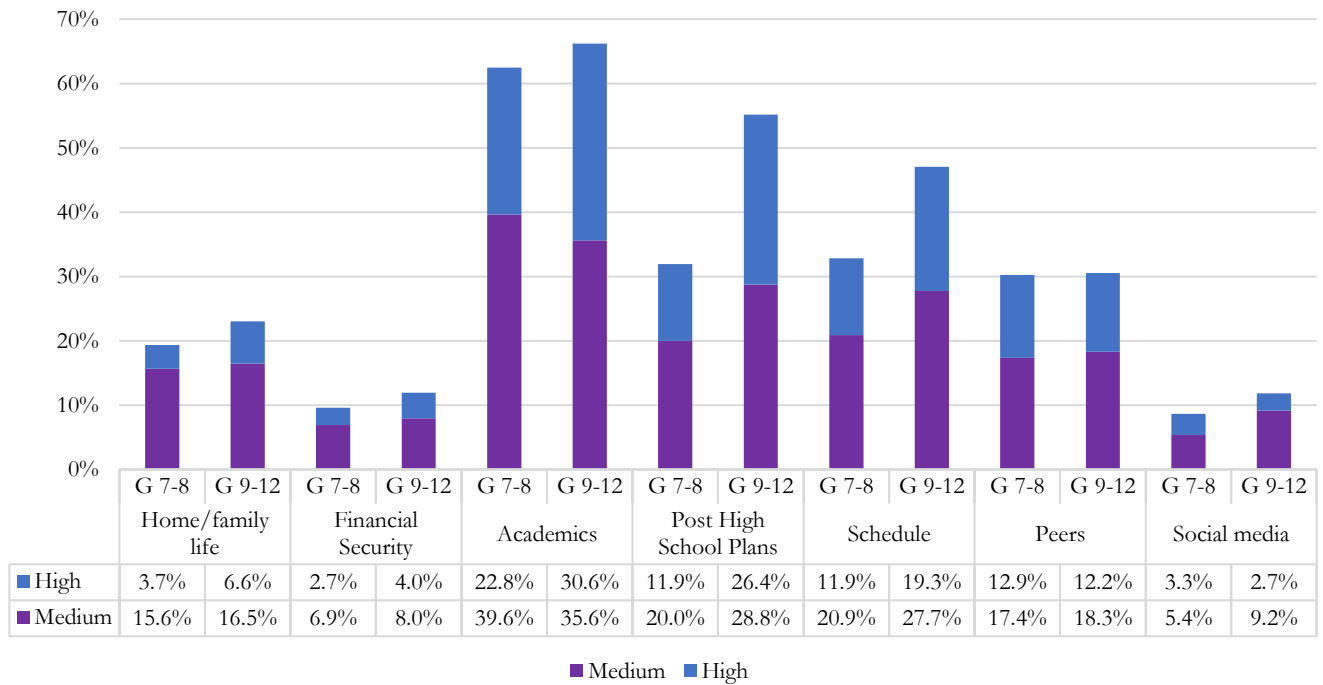
*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth reported always feeling anxiety more than cisgender youth.

Frequency of Anxiety Making Life Difficult



*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth reported always having anxiety make their life difficult more than cisgender youth.

Anxiety Level by Source



- *MS and HS female youth have academics as a high source of anxiety more frequently than male youth.
- *MS and HS female youth have peers as a moderate source of anxiety more frequently than male youth.
- *HS female youth have college or post-high school plans or schedule as a high source of anxiety more frequently than male youth.
- *HS female youth have social media as a moderate source of anxiety more frequently than male youth.
- *MS and HS all other races group youth have finances as a high source of anxiety more frequently than white youth.
- *HS Hispanic youth have finances as a moderate source of anxiety more frequently than white or Asian youth.
- *HS Asian youth have academics or college/post high school plans as a high source of anxiety more frequently than white or Hispanic or all other races youth.

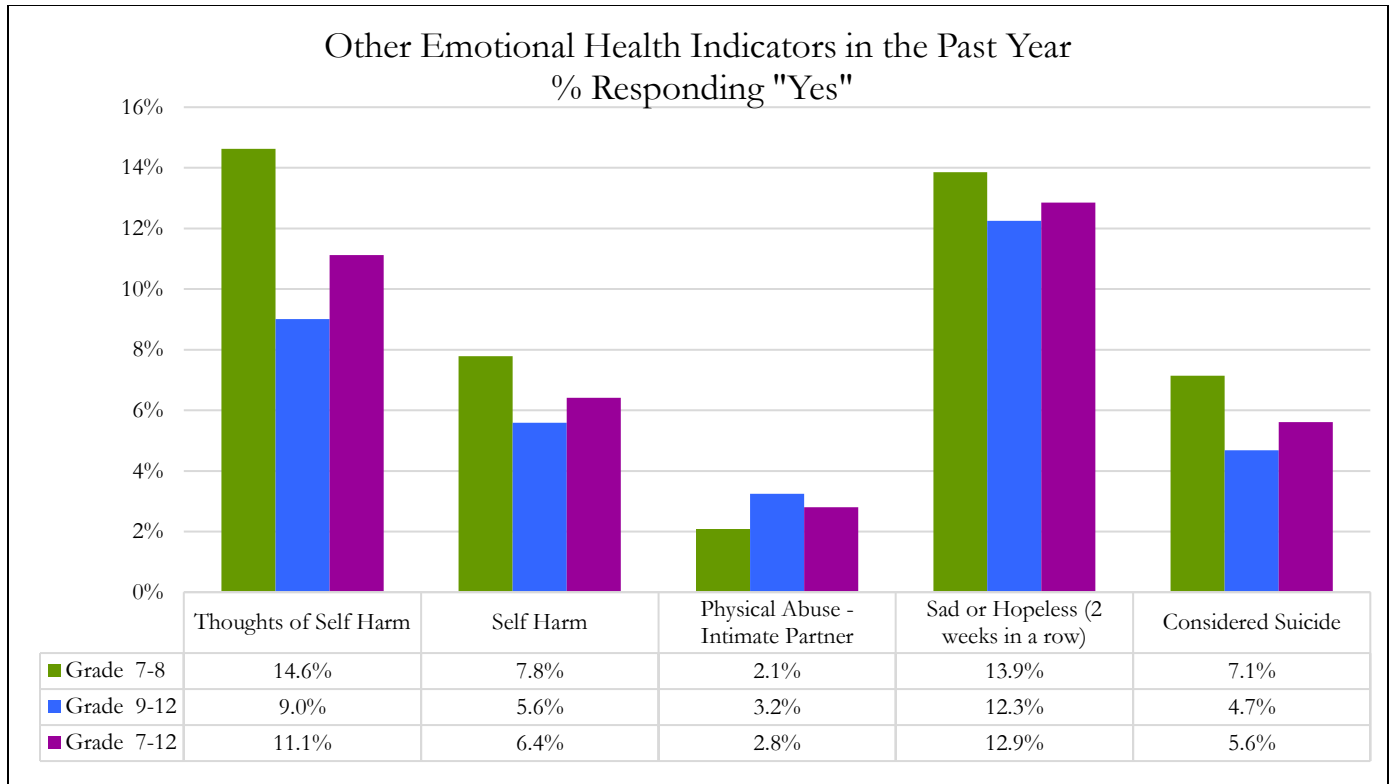
*HS Asian youth have their schedule as a moderate source of anxiety more frequently than white or Hispanic or all other races youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have finances, home life, or peers as a high source of anxiety more frequently than cisgender youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have home life, finances, schedule, or social media as a moderate source of anxiety more frequently than cisgender youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have college or post-high school plans as a high source of anxiety more frequently than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have social media as a high source of anxiety more frequently than cisgender youth.



Note: State data for grades 9-12 (YRBSS 2021) indicate that 35.6% of students felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks in a row, 14.1% considered suicide, and 18.0% harmed themselves in the past year.

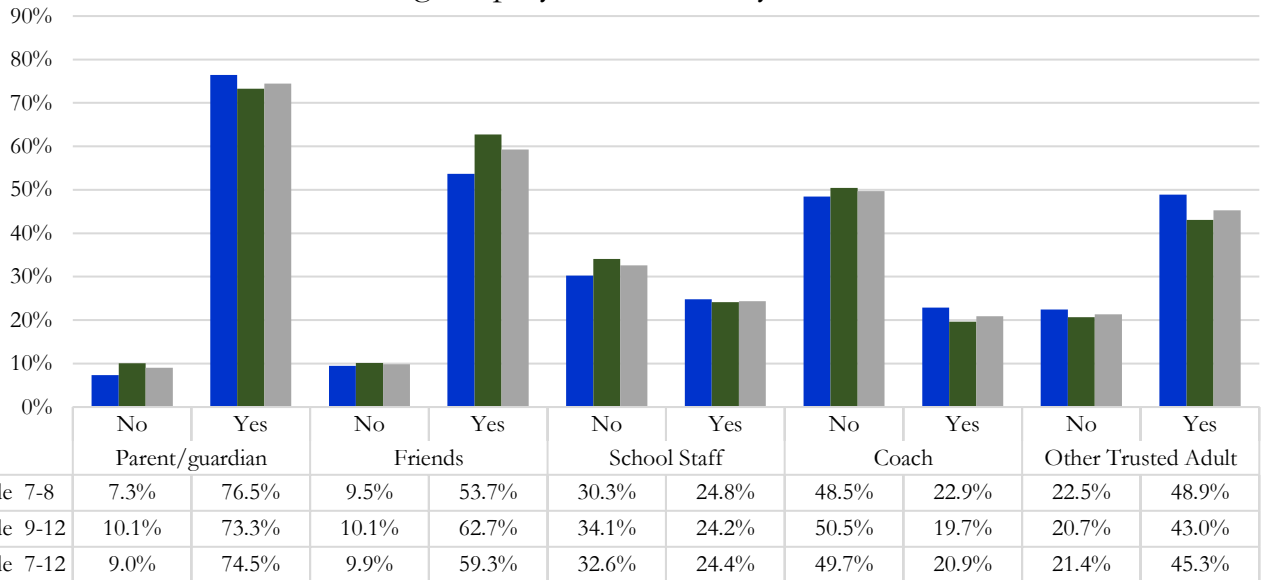
*MS female youth have thoughts of self-harm or have harmed themselves more frequently than male youth.

*HS female youth have experienced depression more frequently than male youth.

*MS all other races group youth have experienced intimate partner abuse more frequently than white youth.

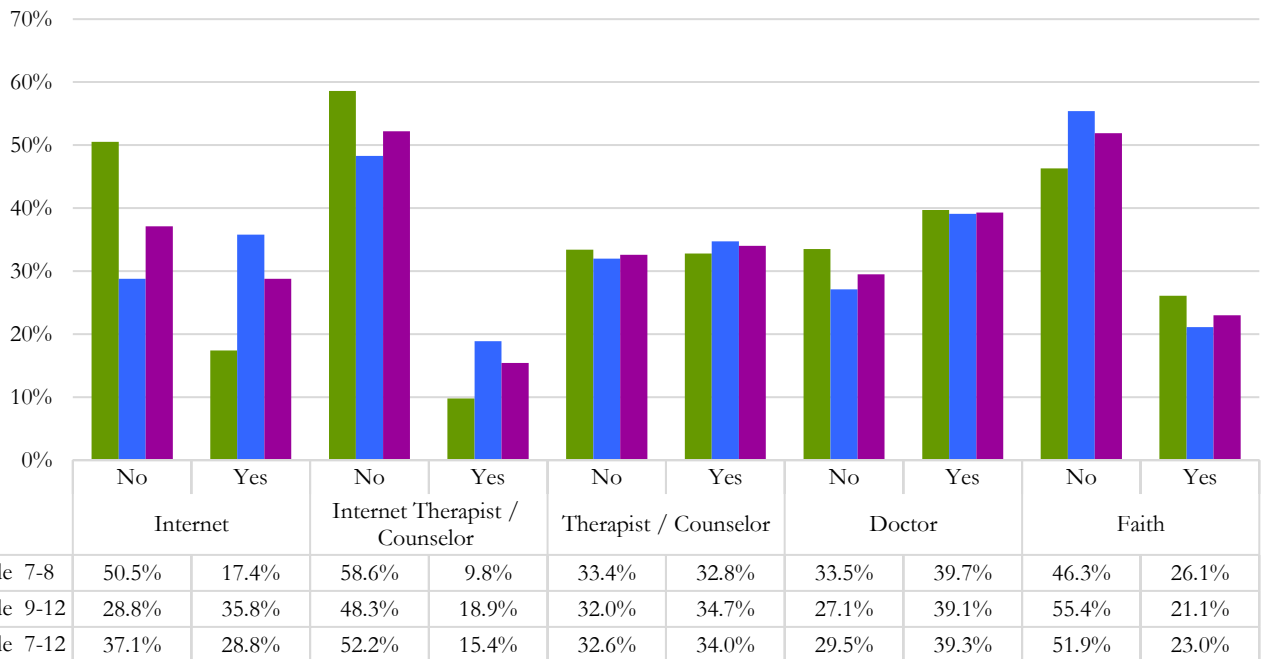
*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth have thoughts of self-harm, harmed themselves, experienced intimate partner abuse, depression, or considered attempting suicide more frequently than cisgender youth.

Comfort Seeking Help by Source-Family and School

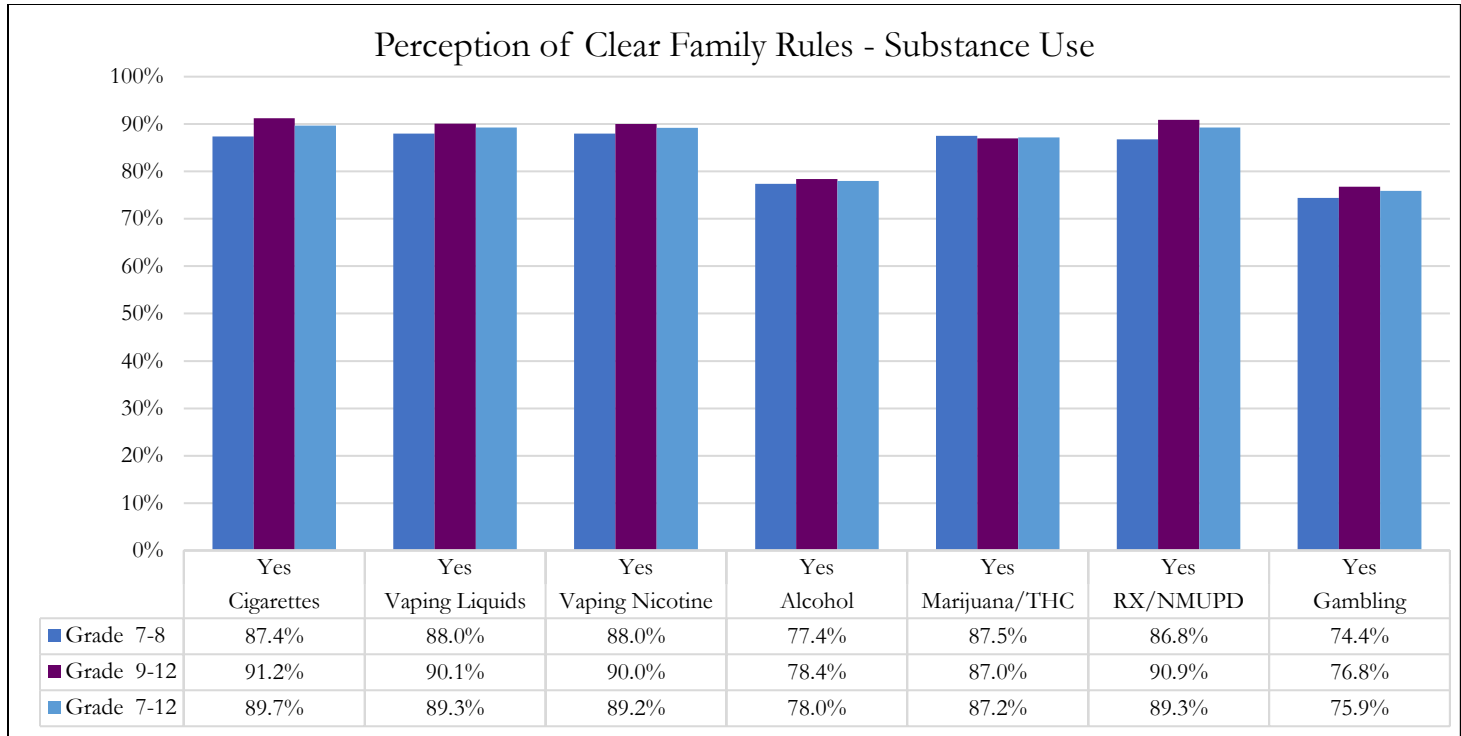


- *MS and HS male youth would not seek help from friends more frequently than female youth.
- *MS and HS female youth would not seek help from a coach or faith leader more frequently than male youth.
- *HS male youth would not seek help from a therapist more frequently than female youth.
- *MS female youth would not seek help from a doctor or nurse more frequently than male youth.
- *MS white youth would not seek help from the internet more frequently than Asian or all other races youth.
- *MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth would not seek help from a parent or other trusted adult more frequently than cisgender youth.
- *MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth would not seek help from a faith leader more frequently than cisgender youth.
- *HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth would not seek help from friends, coach, or a doctor/nurse more frequently than cisgender youth.

Comfort Seeking Help by Source-Community and Internet

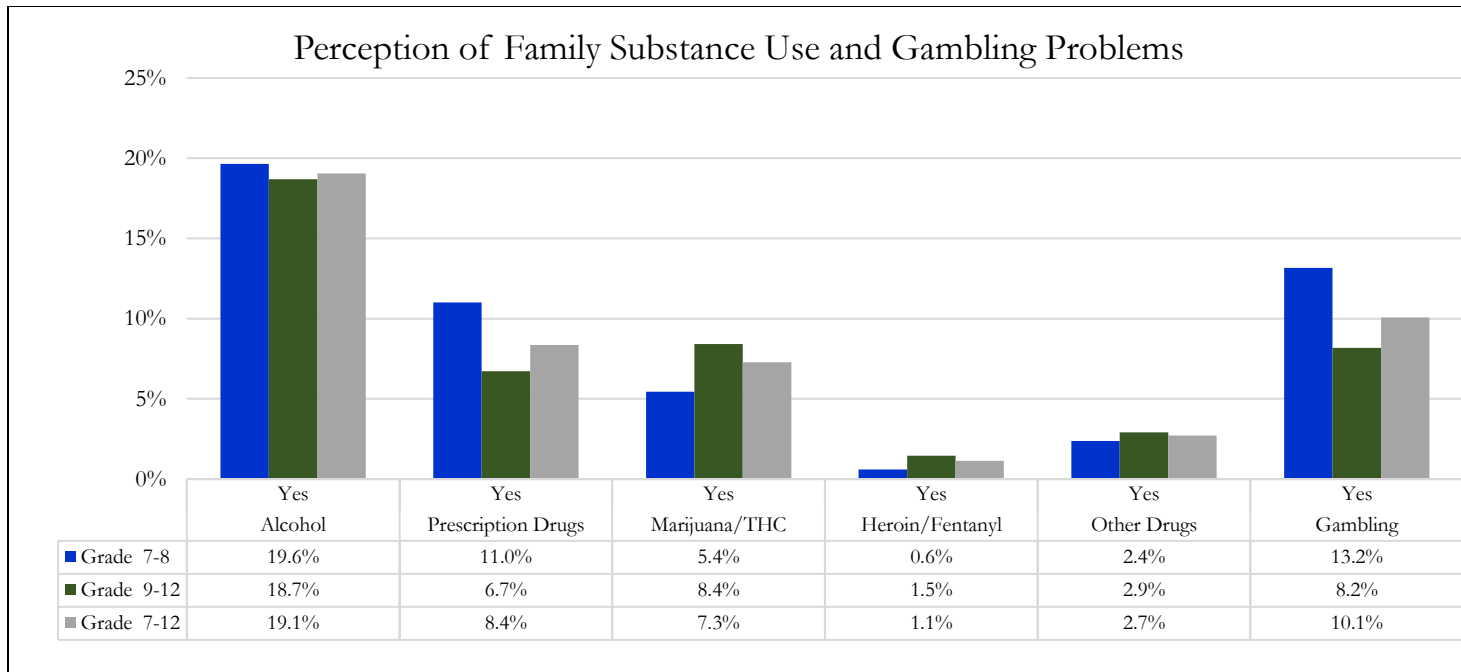


Perceptions of Substance Use, Family Rules and Experiences:



*HS male youth don't perceive clear family rules regarding gambling compared to female youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth don't perceive clear family rules regarding cigarettes, vaping (all), marijuana, prescription drugs, or gambling compared to cisgender youth.



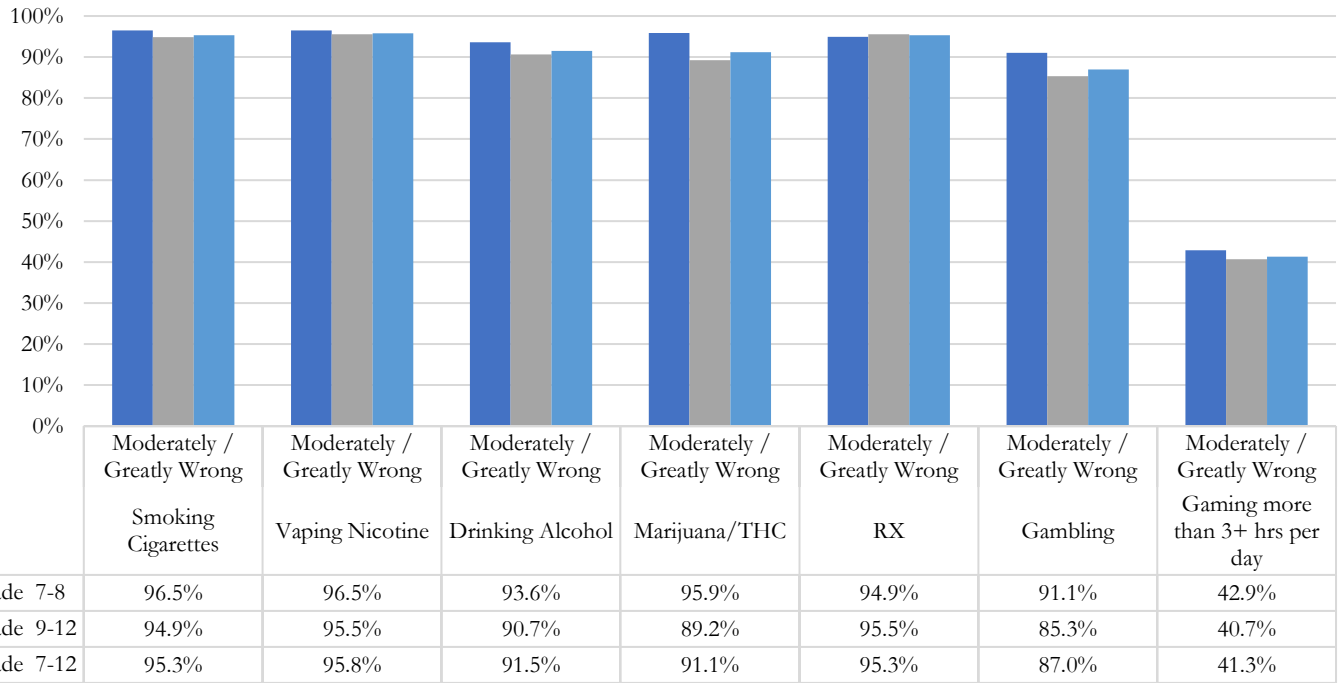
*MS and HS male youth were more likely to report having a family member with a gambling problem than female youth.

*MS male youth were more likely to report having a family member with an alcohol problem than female youth.

*HS Hispanic youth were more likely to report having a family member with a prescription drug problem than white youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth were more likely to report having a family member with a substance use (all) or gambling problem more frequently than cisgender youth.

Perception of Parental Disapproval



*HS male youth perceive less parental disapproval for gambling or gaming than female youth.

*MS white youth perceive less parental disapproval for gaming than Asian youth.

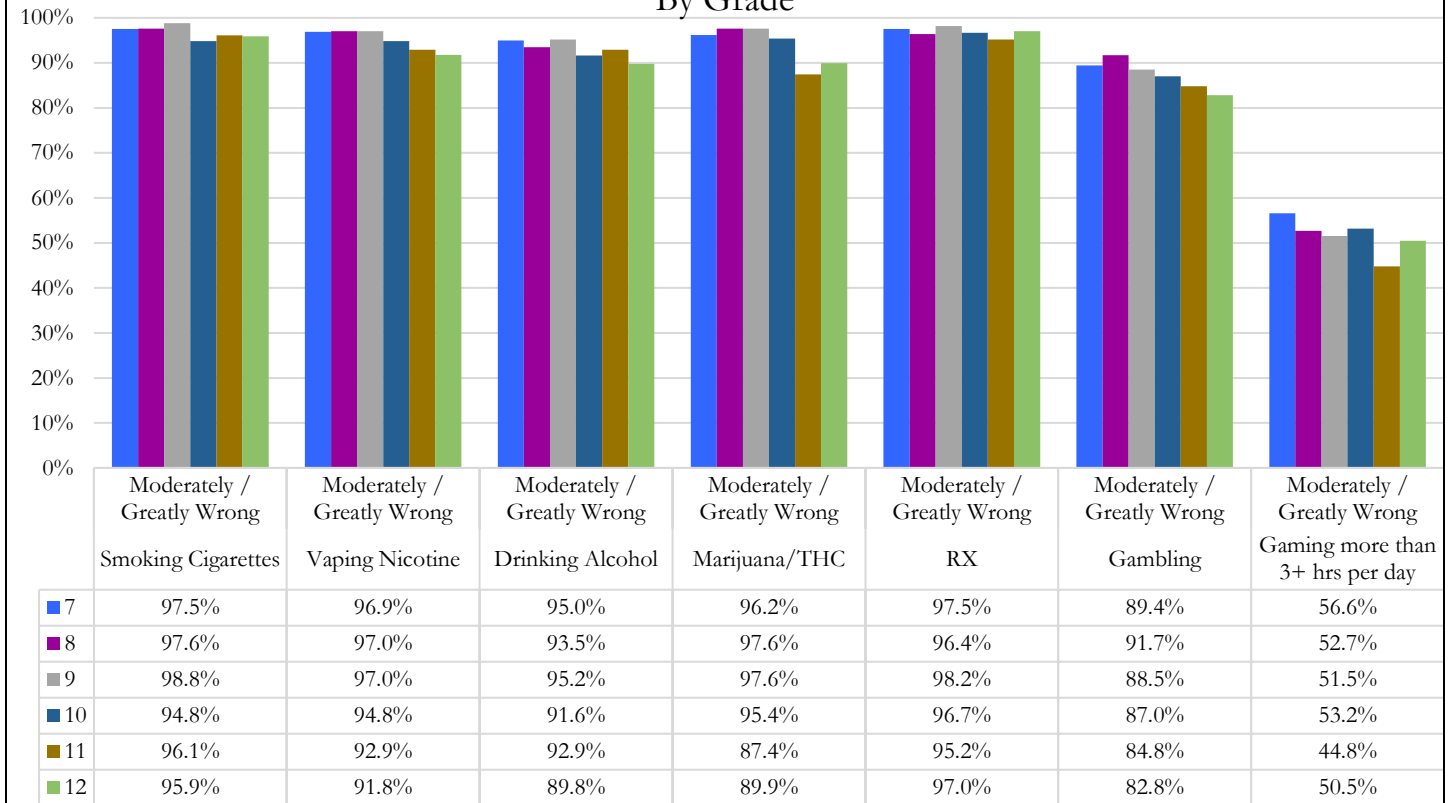
*MS Hispanic youth perceive less parental disapproval for gaming than Asian youth.

*HS Hispanic youth perceive less parental disapproval for smoking cigarettes, marijuana, or prescription drugs than white youth.

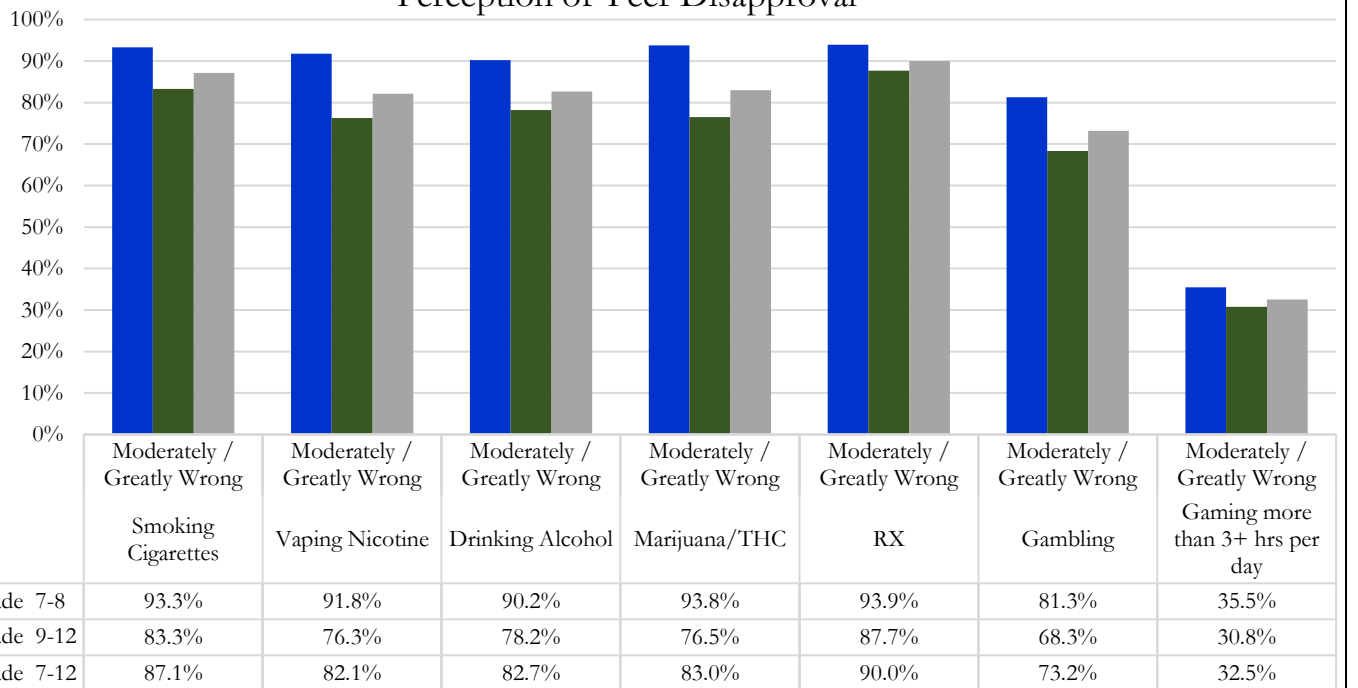
*HS Hispanic youth perceive less parental disapproval for gambling than white or Asian youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive less parental disapproval for all substances or gambling than cisgender youth.

Perception of Parental Disapproval By Grade



Perception of Peer Disapproval



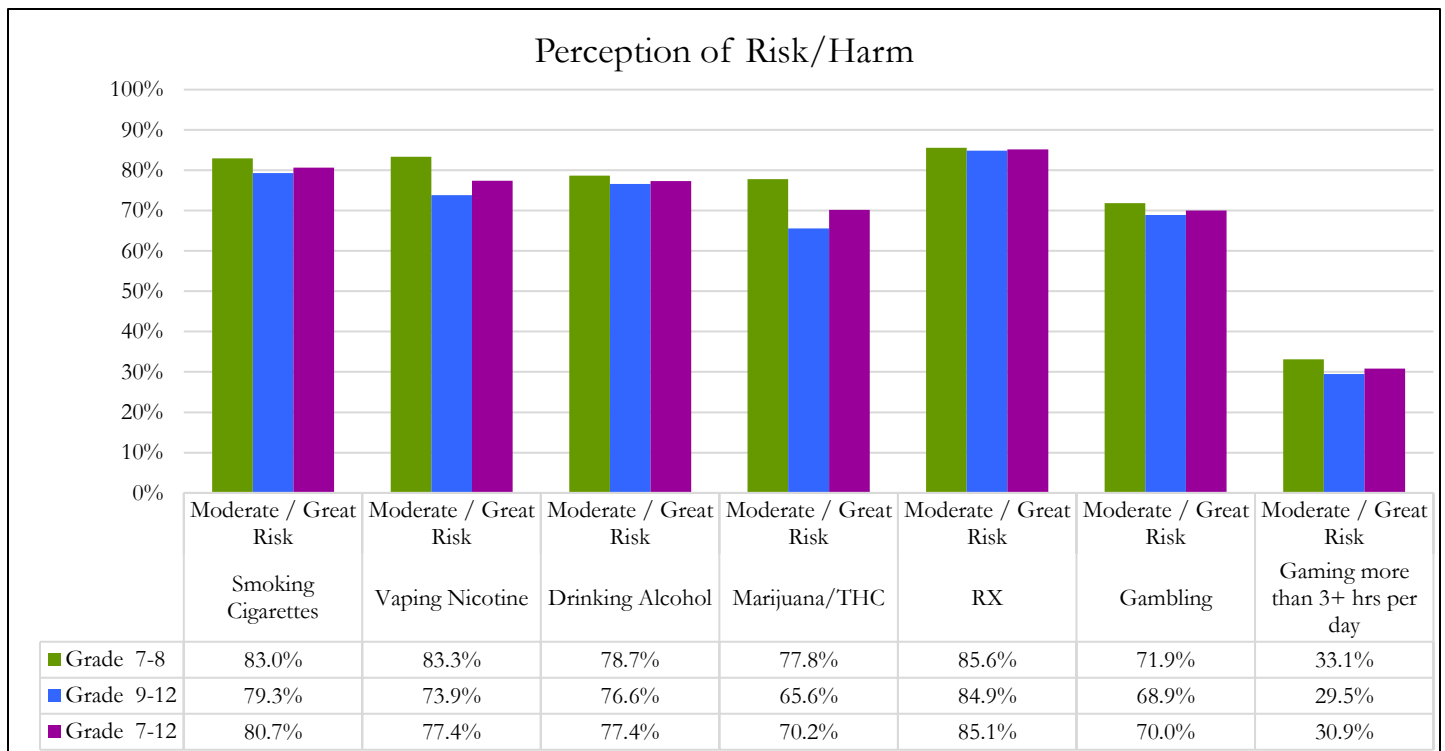
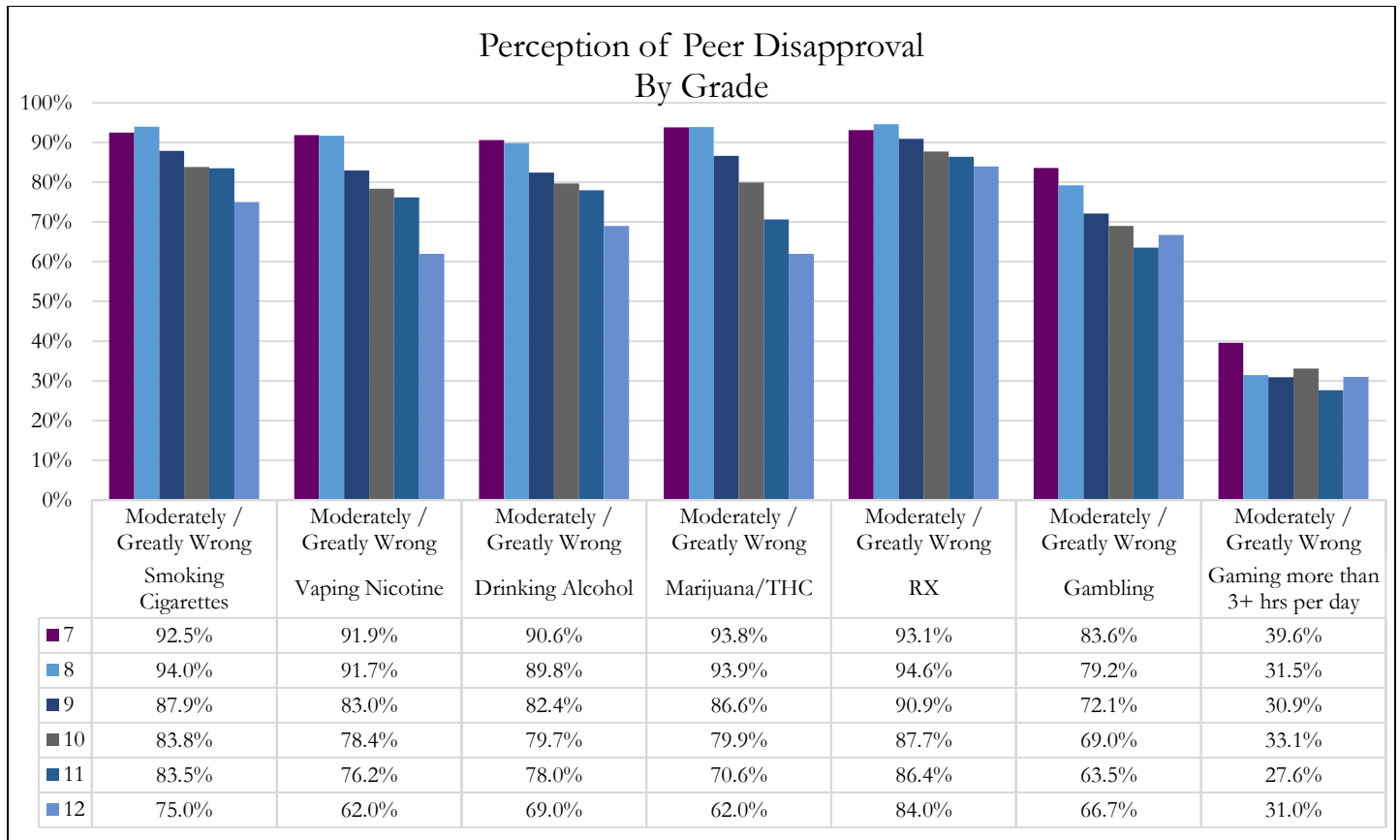
*MS and HS male youth perceive less peer disapproval for gambling than female youth.

*HS male youth perceive less peer disapproval for gaming than female youth.

*HS Hispanic youth perceive less peer disapproval for vaping or marijuana than Asian youth.

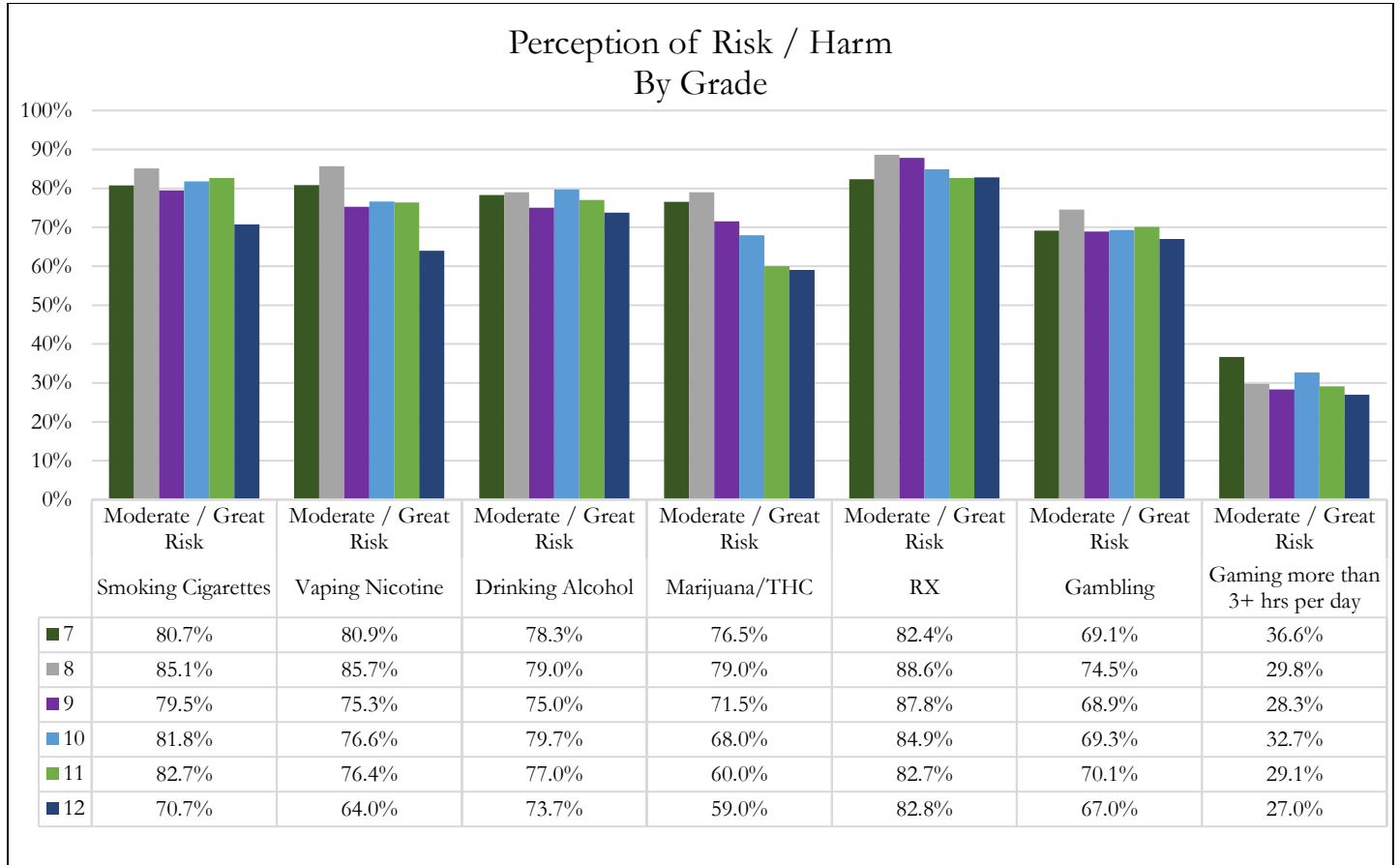
*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive less peer disapproval for smoking cigarettes than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive less peer disapproval for vaping, marijuana, prescription drugs, or gambling than cisgender youth.



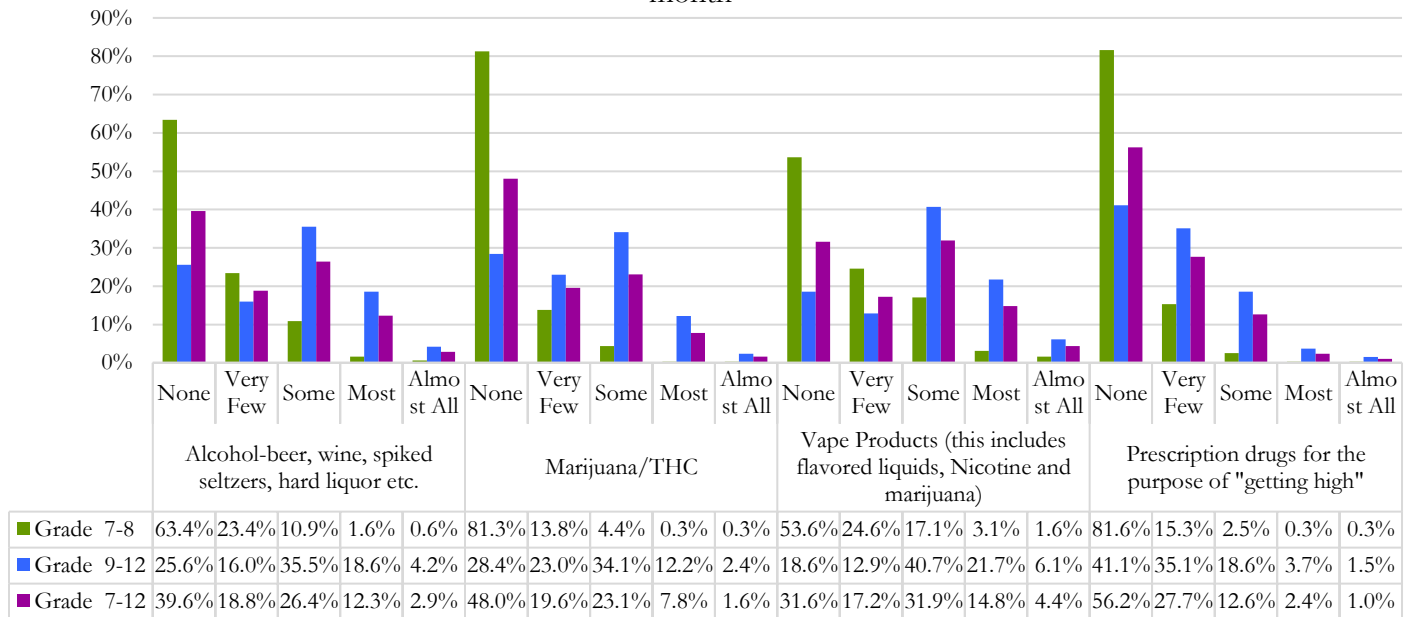
*MS and HS male youth perceive lower risk for gambling than female youth.

- *HS male youth perceive lower risk for drinking alcohol or gaming than female youth.
- *MS and HS white youth perceive lower risk for drinking alcohol or using marijuana than Asian youth.
- *HS white youth perceive lower risk for smoking cigarettes than Asian youth.
- *HS Hispanic youth perceive lower risk for smoking cigarettes, vaping, or marijuana than Asian youth.
- *HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive lower risk for using prescription drugs than cisgender youth.



Perception of Peer Use in Past Month

"Estimate the percentage of peers that have used the following substances in the past month"



*HS female youth were more likely to perceive most peers use marijuana than male youth.

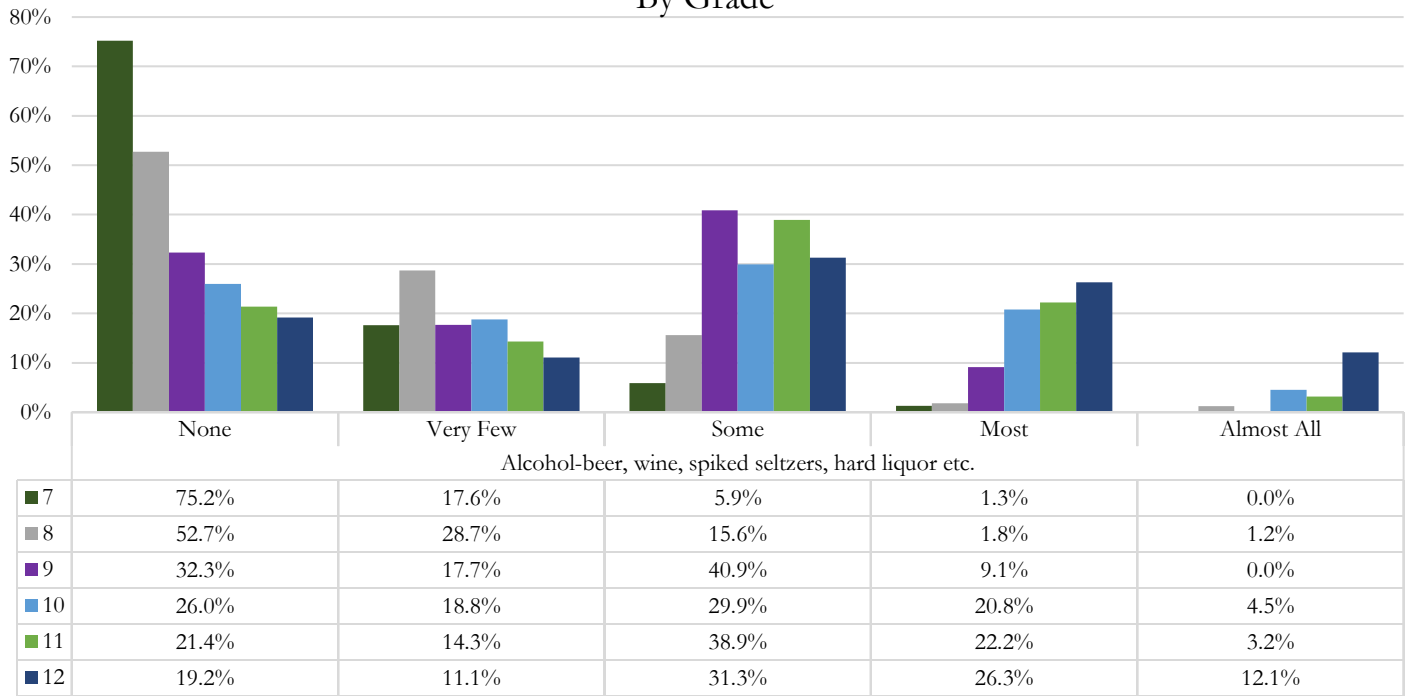
*HS Hispanic youth were more likely to perceive almost all peers use alcohol or marijuana than white youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth were more likely to perceive almost all peers vape than cisgender youth.

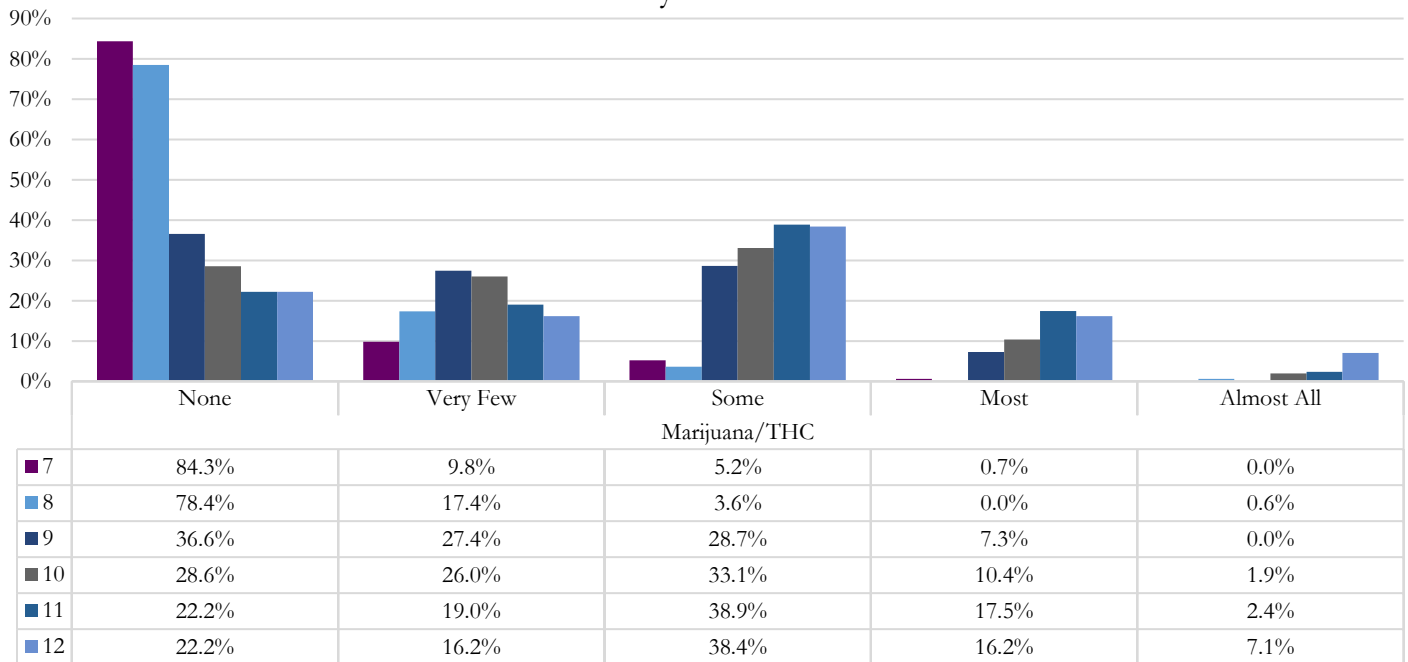
*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth were more likely to perceive almost all peers use alcohol than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth were more likely to perceive almost all peers use marijuana or prescription drugs than cisgender youth.

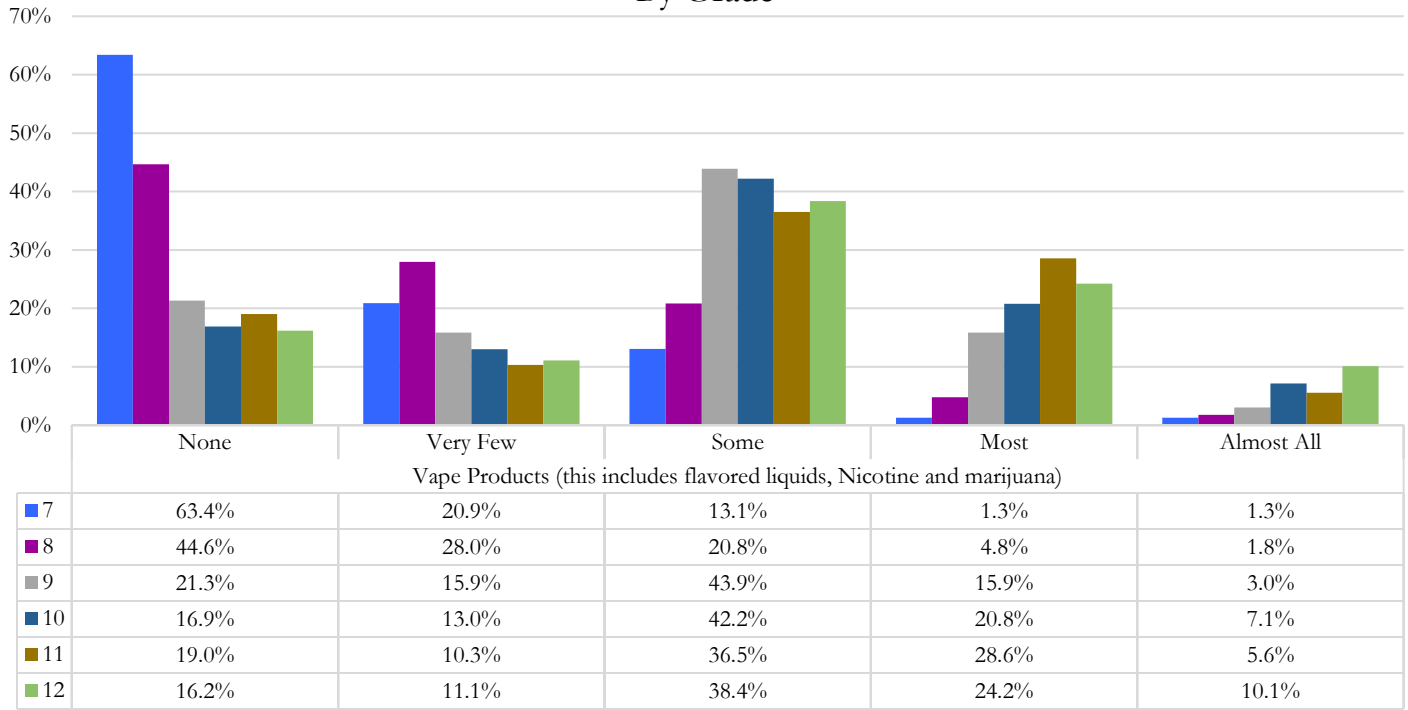
Perception of Peer Alcohol Use in Past Month By Grade



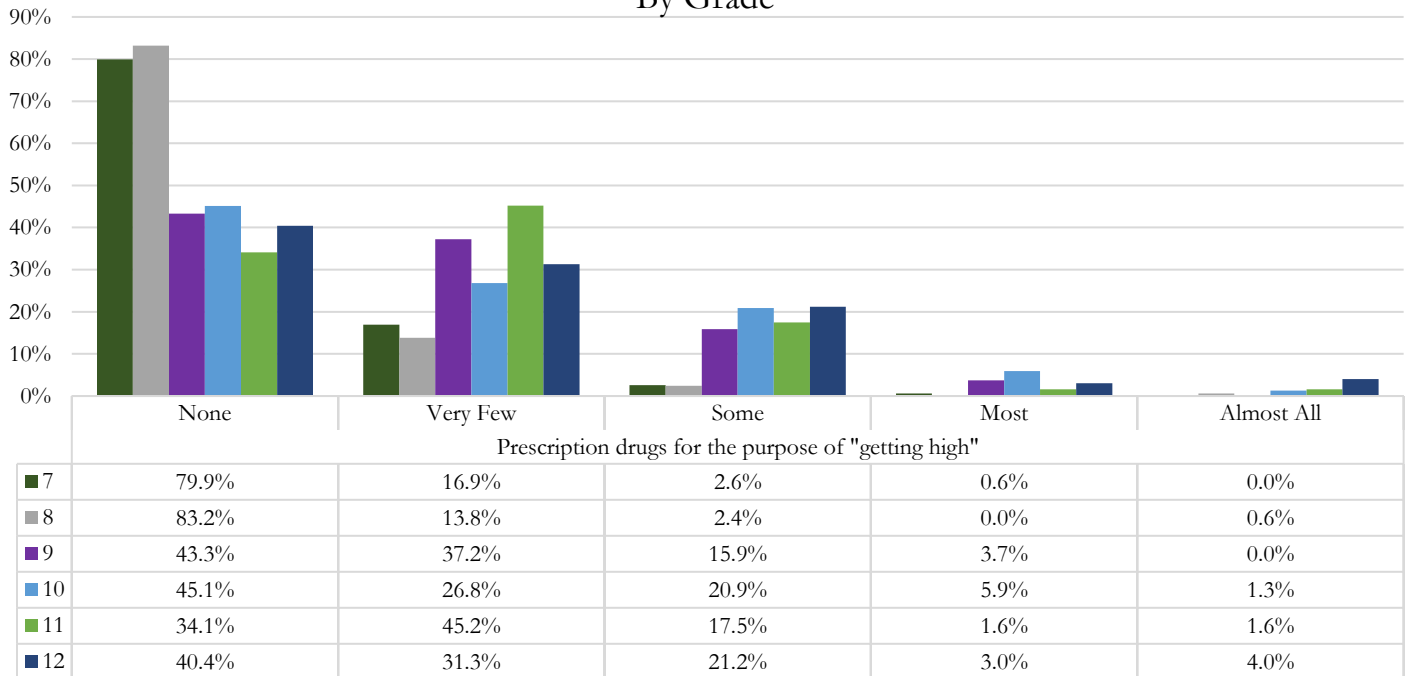
Perception of Peer Marijuana Use in Past Month By Grade



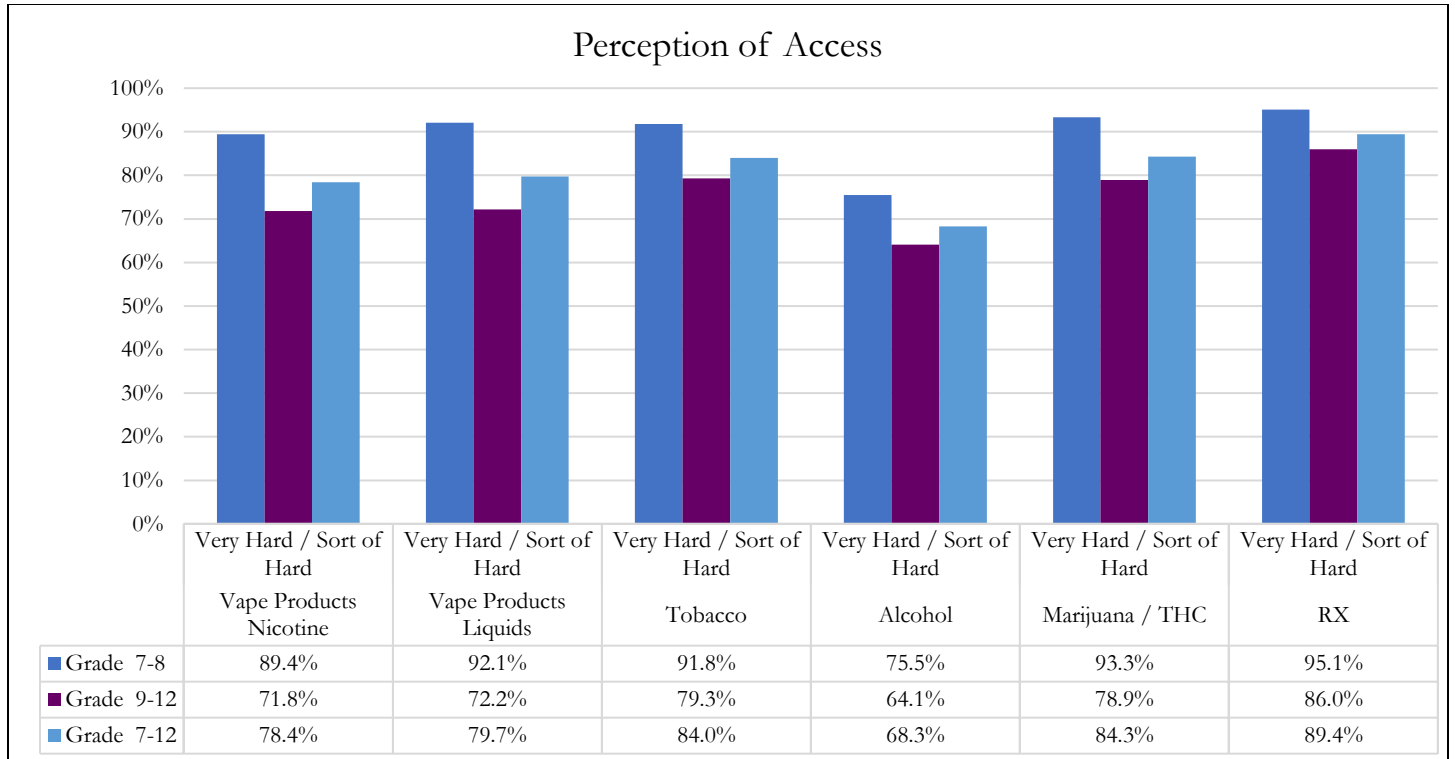
Perception of Peer Vaping Use in Past Month By Grade



Perception of Peer RX Use in Past Month By Grade



Ease of Access:



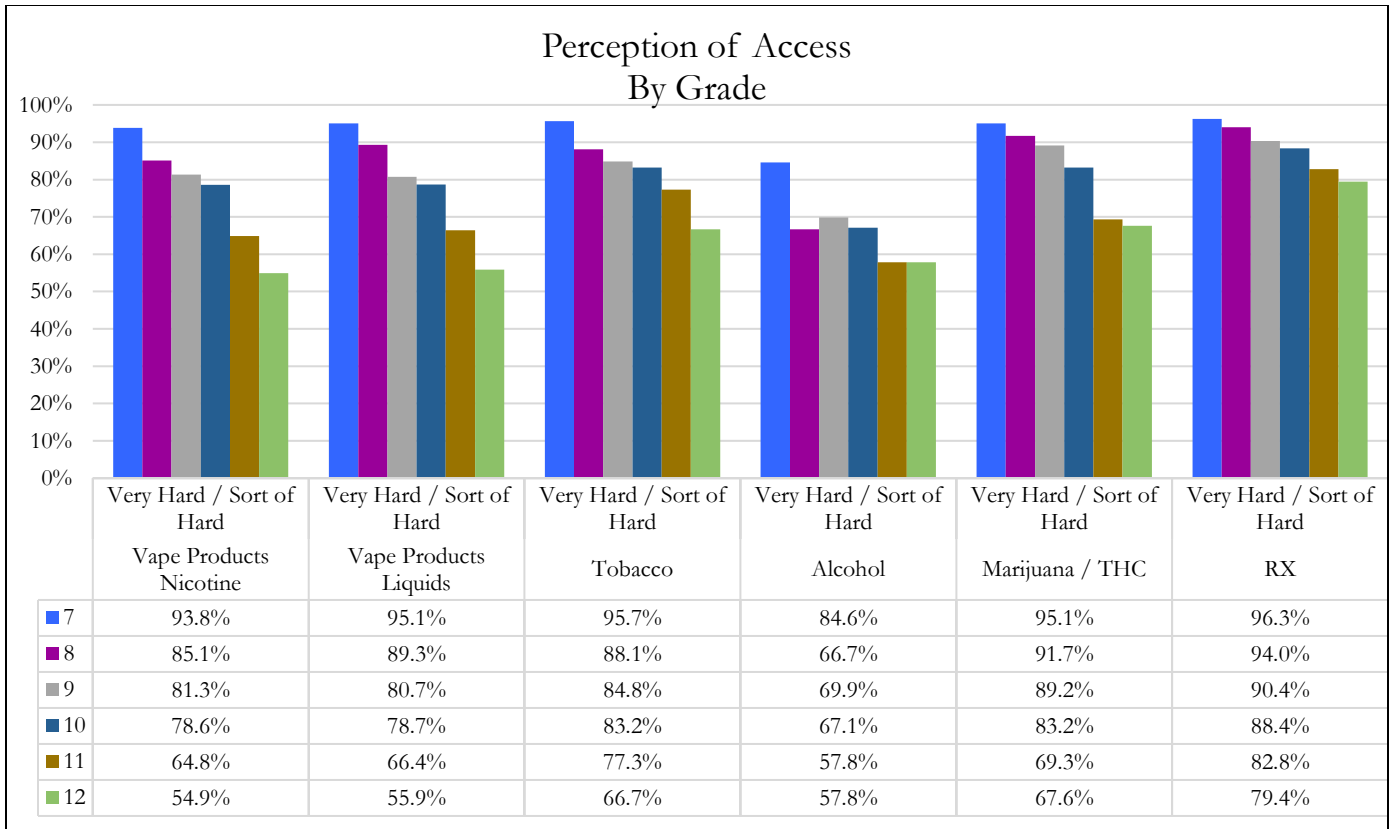
*HS male youth perceive it to be easier to access prescription drugs than female youth.

*HS Hispanic youth perceive it to be easier to access marijuana than Asian youth.

*MS and HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive it to be easier to access tobacco products than cisgender youth.

*MS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive it to be easier to access alcohol than cisgender youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive it to be easier to access vape products(all), marijuana, or prescription drugs than cisgender youth.



Substance Use and Gambling:

Risk Factors for Any Substance Use in Youth's Lifetime, Grades 7-12:

The following list includes youth reported experiences and perceptions that are statistically associated with lifetime use of any substance use. It is important to note association should not be considered causation.

Ellington Middle and High School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

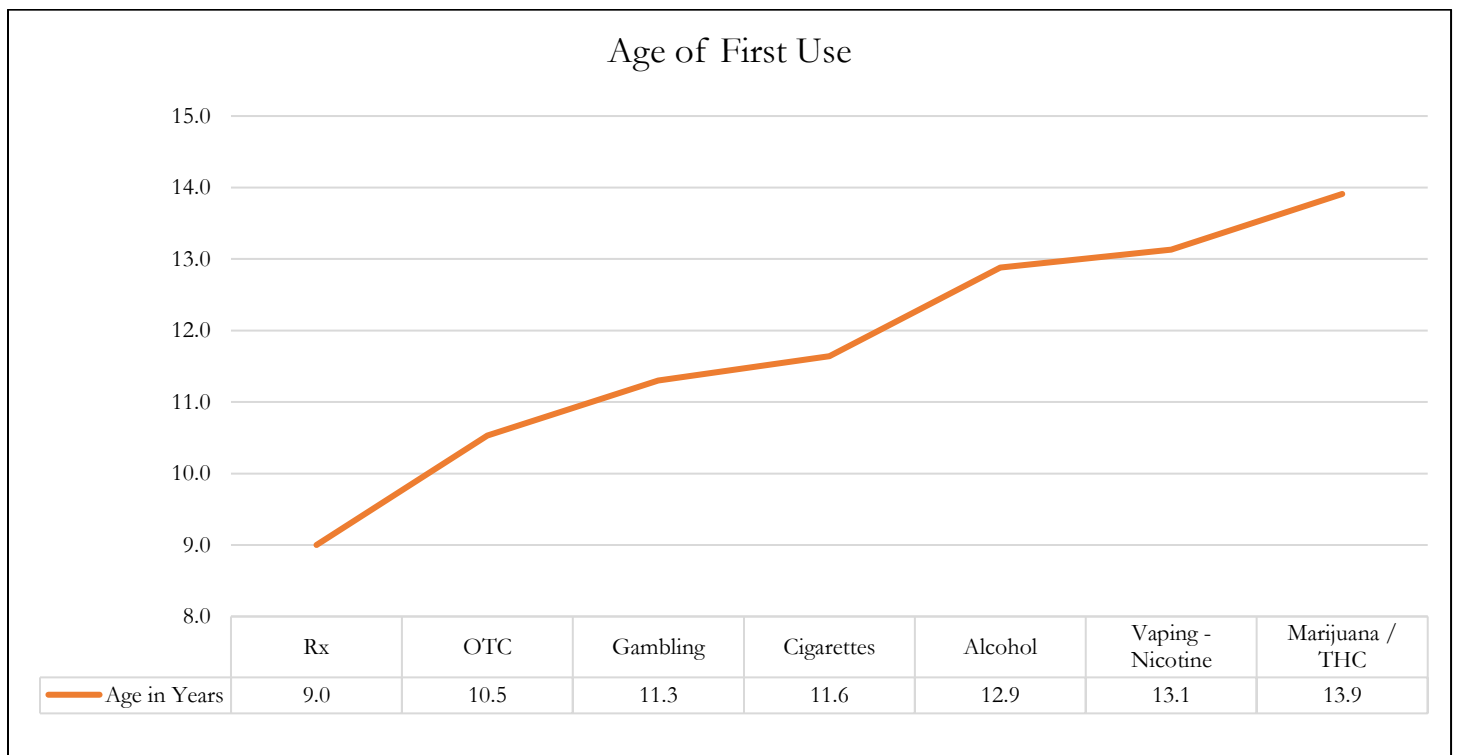
- Spend more time unsupervised
- Feel less safe at school
- Have the following experiences due to gaming: not getting sleep, not completing homework, seeing inappropriate thing, or purchased loot boxes (microtransactions)
- See or hear something their parents would feel was inappropriate on social media
- Feel worse about themselves due to social media
- Have thoughts of self-harm or have harmed themselves
- Have experienced depression
- Not seek help from a parent, school resource, therapist, doctor/nurse, or other trusted adult
- Have less clear family rules for alcohol or gambling
- Report more family substance use problems for alcohol, prescription drugs, marijuana, other drugs, or gambling
- Perceive less parental disapproval for alcohol, gambling, or gaming
- Perceive less peer disapproval for cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, marijuana, gambling, or gaming
- Perceive less risk in alcohol or gambling
- Perceive easier access to vapes, alcohol, or marijuana
- Perceive less teammate disapproval of substance use

Ellington High School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

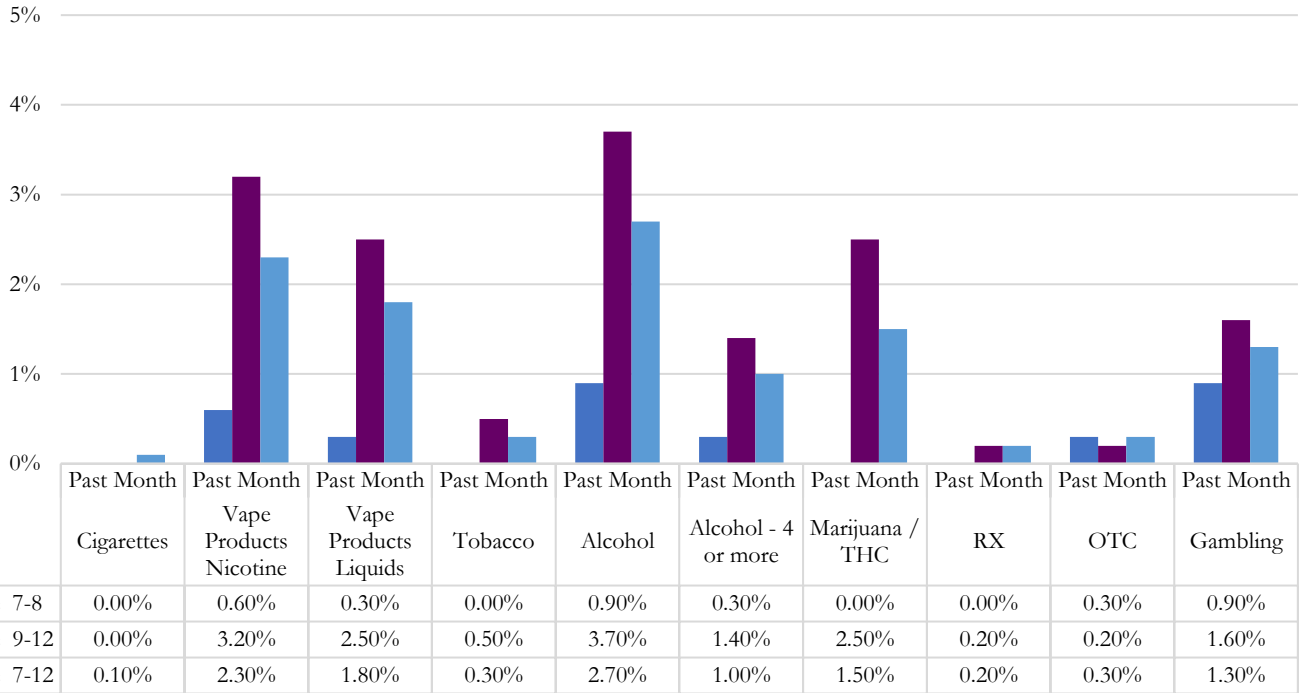
- Feel less safe in the community
- Not know how to get help for mental or substance use problems
- Have the following experiences due to gaming: getting into fights, been asked personal info, were threatened, or had a hard time stopping
- Feel excluded, unsafe, or have a hard time stopping social media
- Report always feeling anxiety
- Have anxiety make their life difficult
- Have home life, post high school plans, schedule, peers, or social media as a high source of anxiety
- Have finances as a moderate source of anxiety
- Experienced partner abuse
- Have considered attempting suicide in the past year
- Not seek help from a friend, coach, internet counselor, or faith leader
- Have less clear family rules for marijuana
- Perceive less parental disapproval of vaping or marijuana
- Perceive lower risk for vaping, marijuana, or gaming
- Perceive more vape, prescription drug, marijuana, or alcohol use by their peers
- Perceive easier access to tobacco products or prescription drugs
- Perceive less coach disapproval of substance use

Ellington Middle School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

- Have gotten into a verbal or physical fight because of social media
- Feel better about themselves because of social media
- Have been bullied more regularly
- Have almost never had adults prevent bullying
- Perceive less peer disapproval for prescription drugs



Past Month Use of CORE Substances and Gambling



*HS female youth had past month use of nicotine vape products more frequently than male youth.

*MS all other races group youth had past month use of nicotine vape products more frequently than white youth.

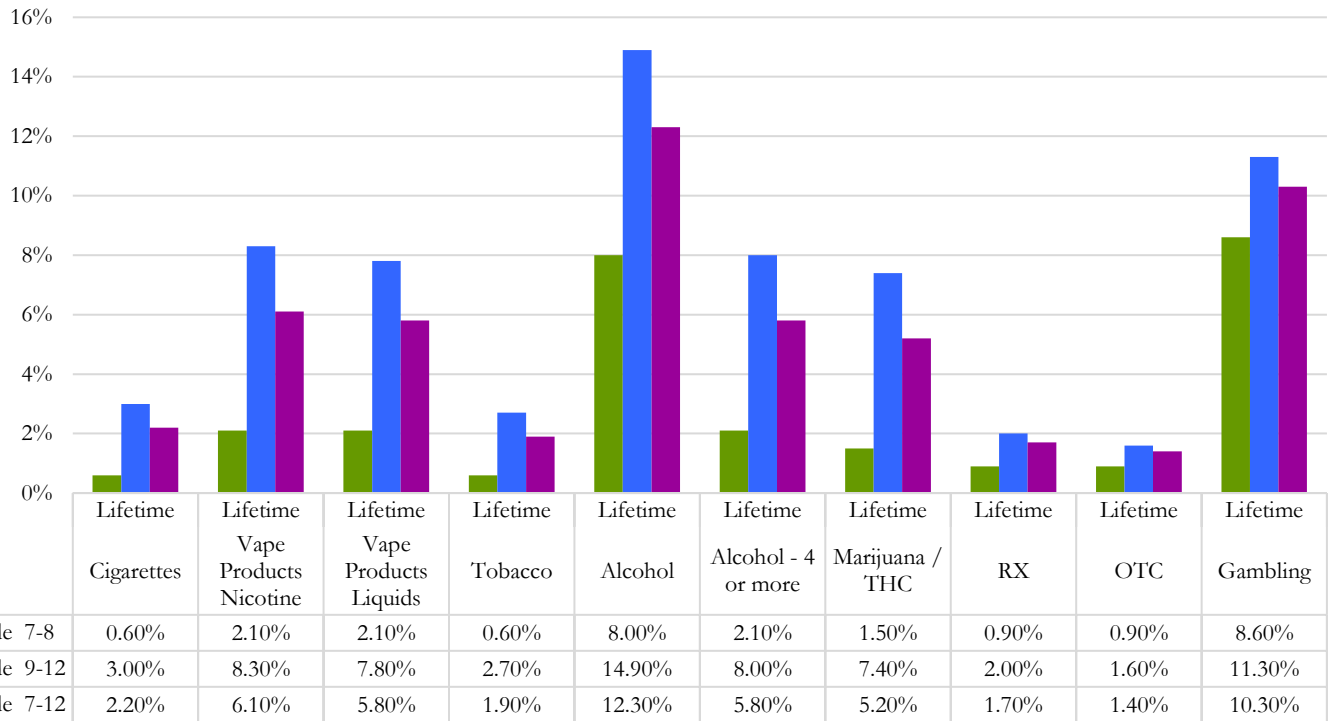
*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth had past month use of other tobacco products more frequently than cisgender youth.

*HS female youth had past month use of marijuana more frequently than male youth.

*HS male youth had past month use of gambling more frequently than female youth.

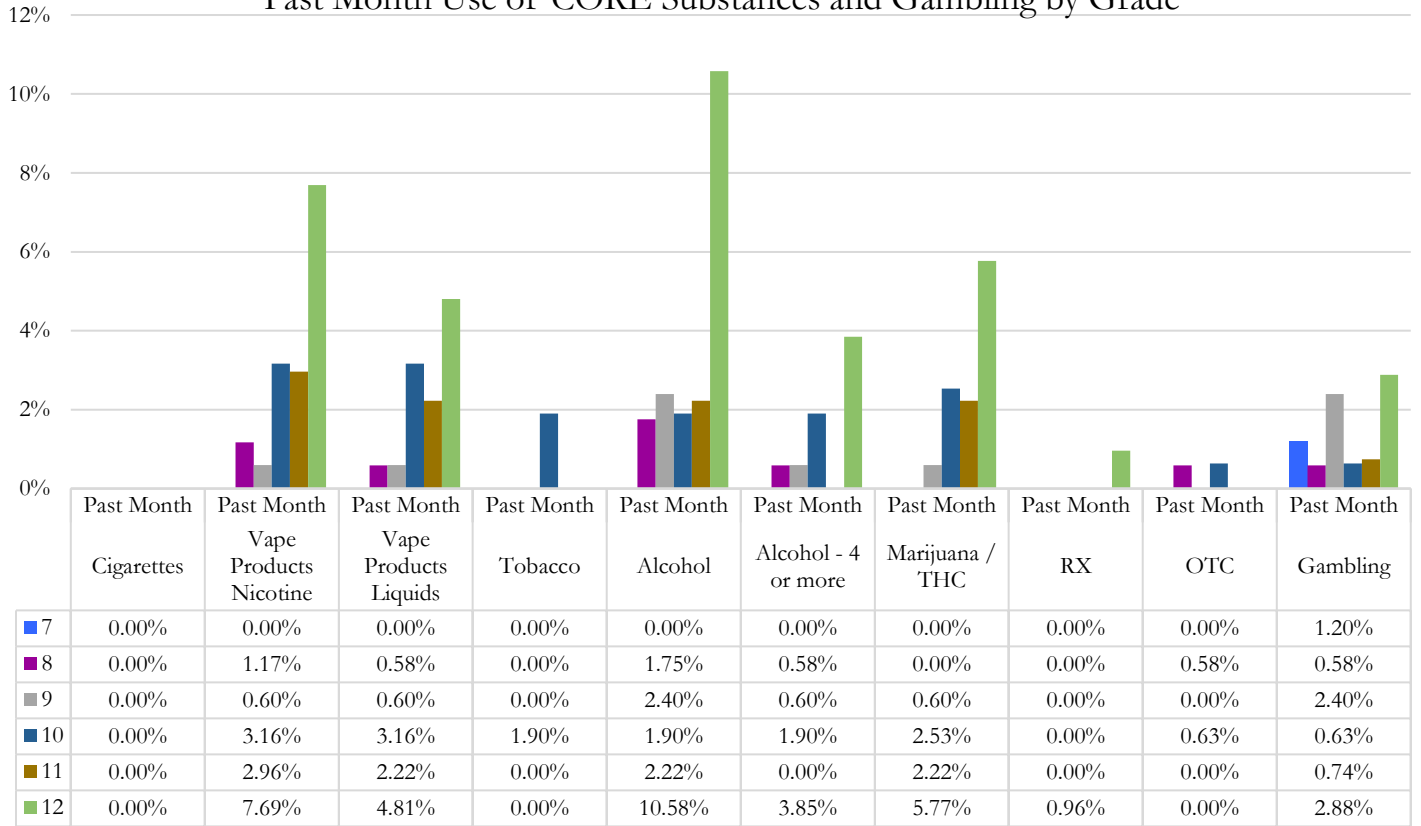
*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth had past month use of gambling more frequently than cisgender youth.

Lifetime Use of CORE Substances and Gambling

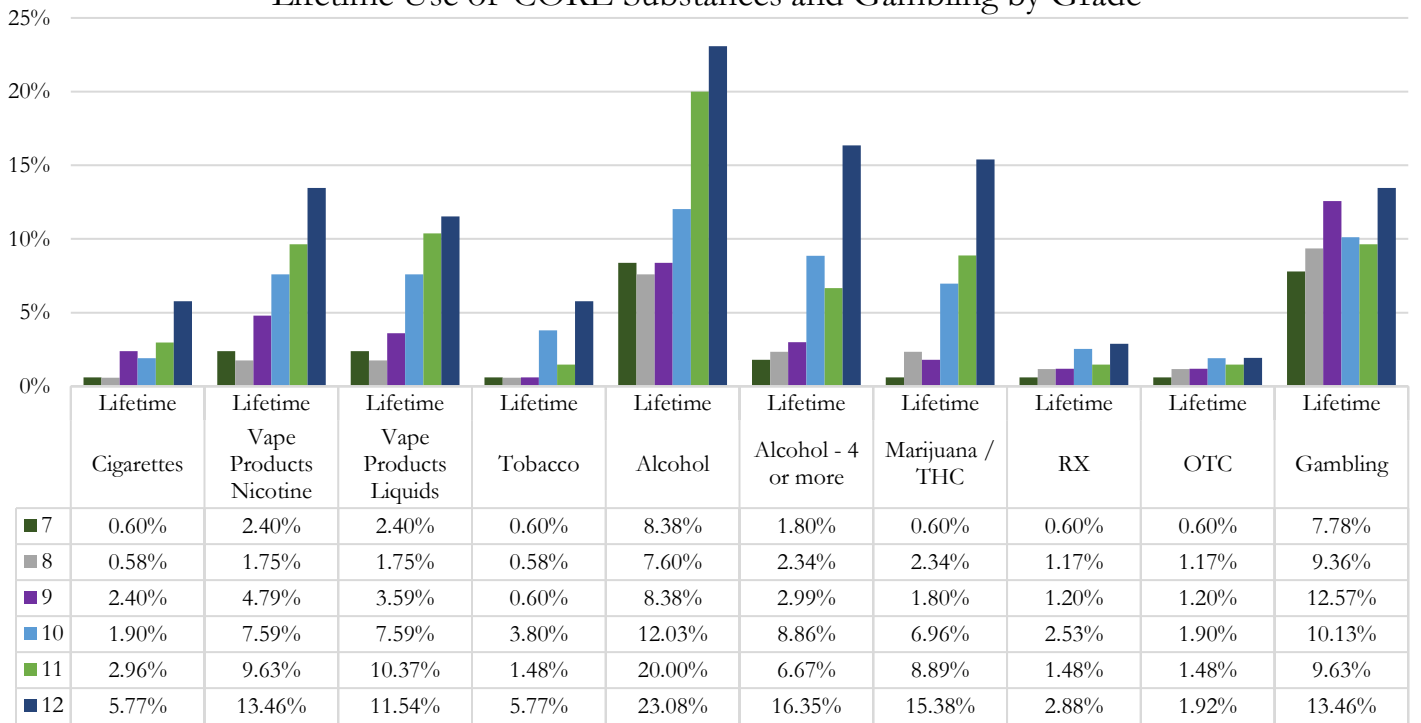


- *HS female youth are more likely to have used all vape products than male youth.
- *MS all other races group youth are more likely to have used nicotine vape products than white youth.
- *MS Asian youth are more likely to have ever used other vape products than white youth.
- *HS Hispanic youth are more likely to have ever used other tobacco products than white youth.
- *HS female youth are more likely to have used marijuana than male youth.
- *HS male youth are more likely to have ever gambled than female youth.

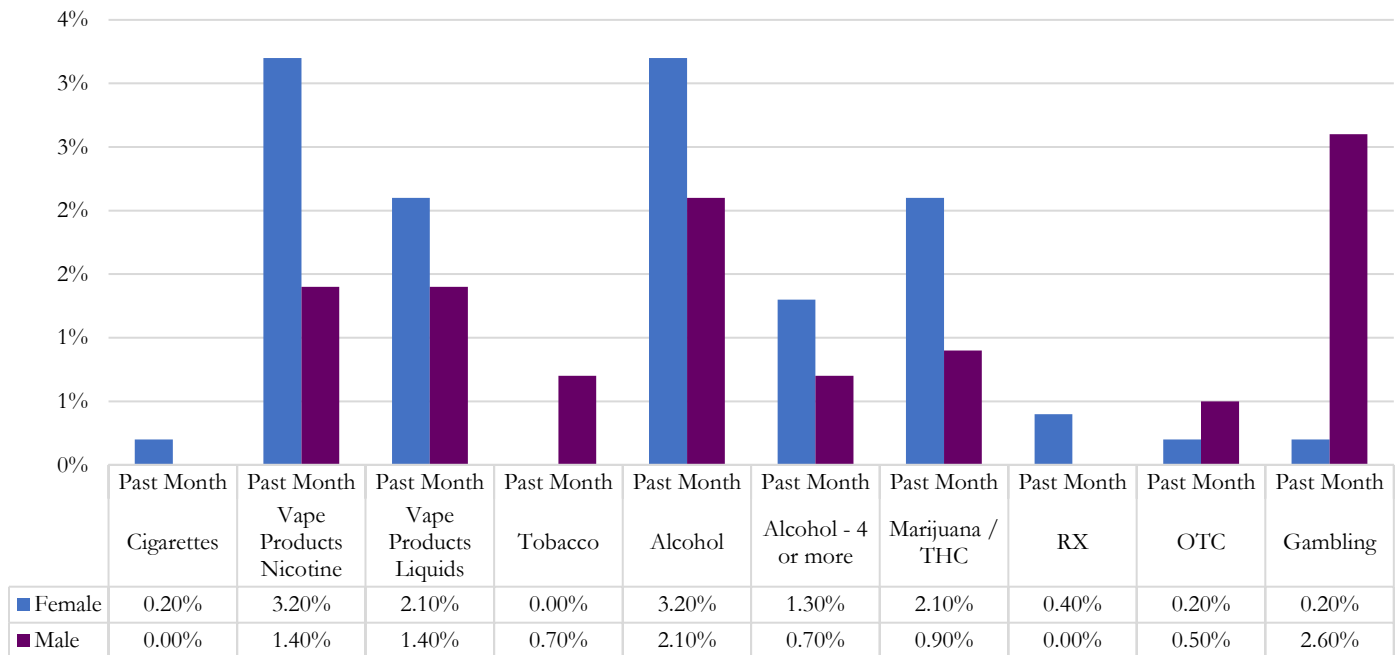
Past Month Use of CORE Substances and Gambling by Grade



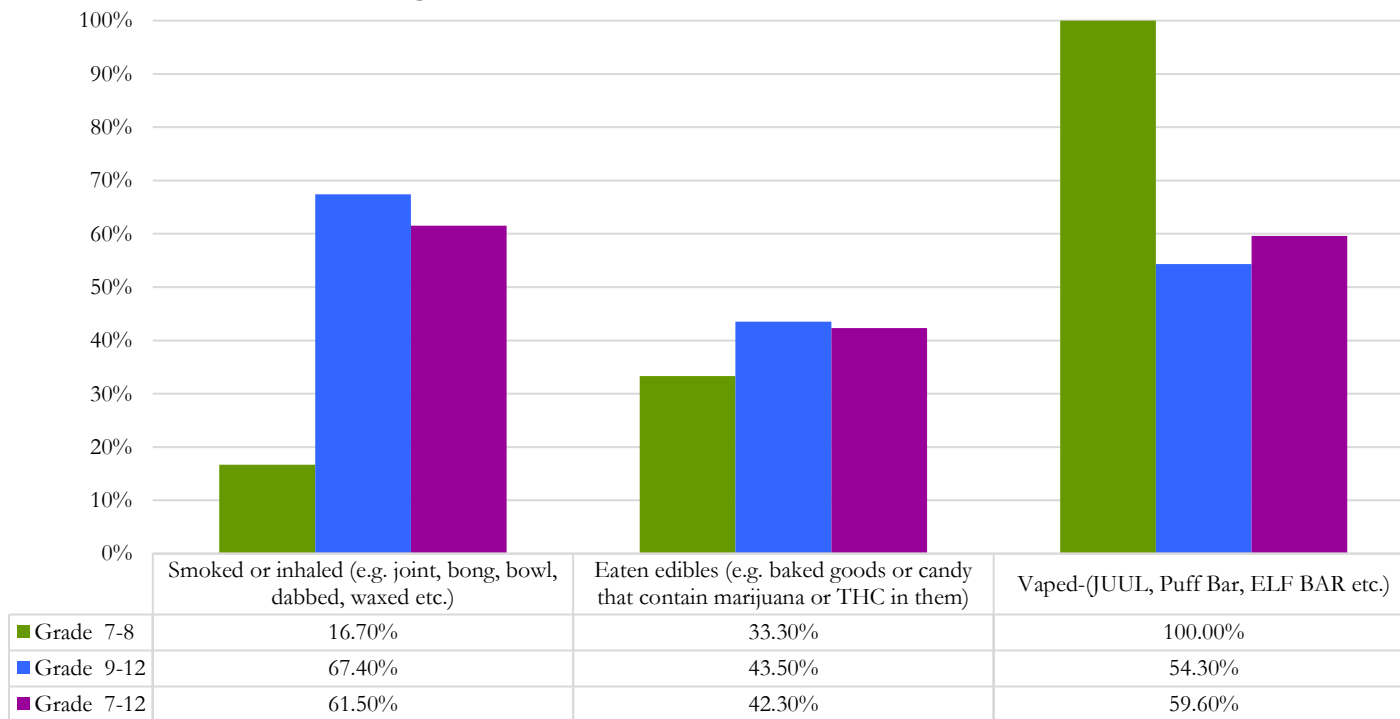
Lifetime Use of CORE Substances and Gambling by Grade



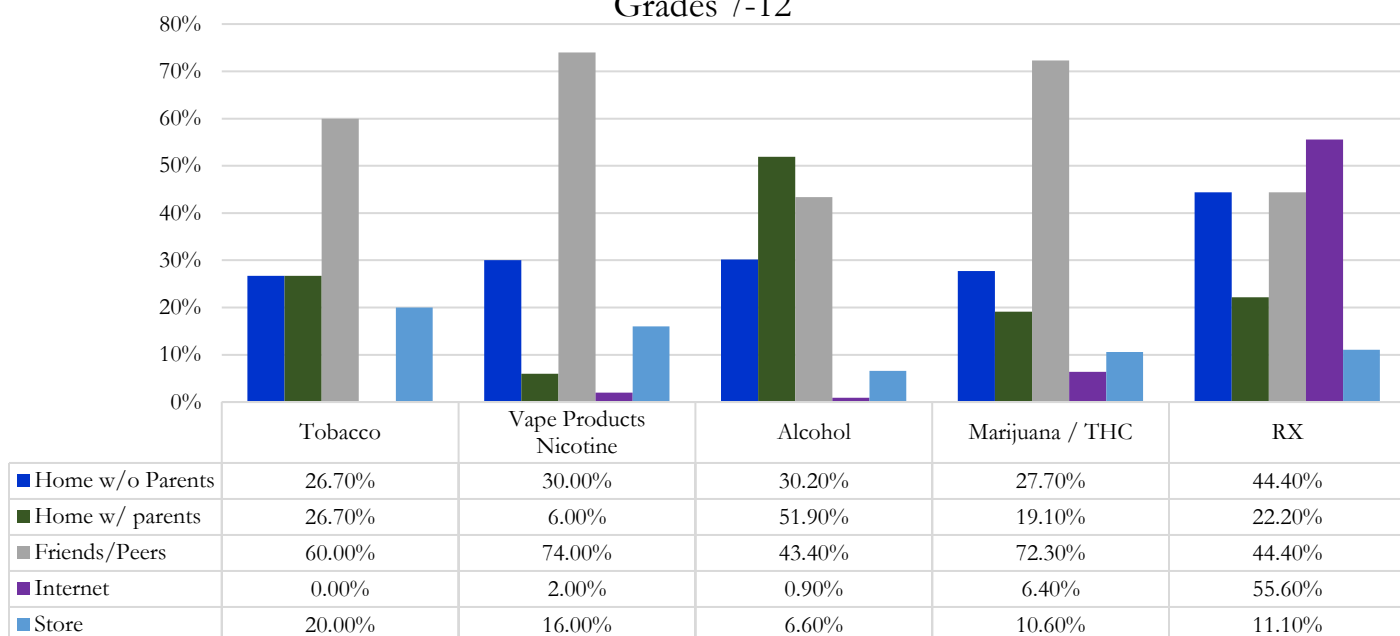
Biological Sex Differences in CORE Substance Use and Gambling Grades 7-12



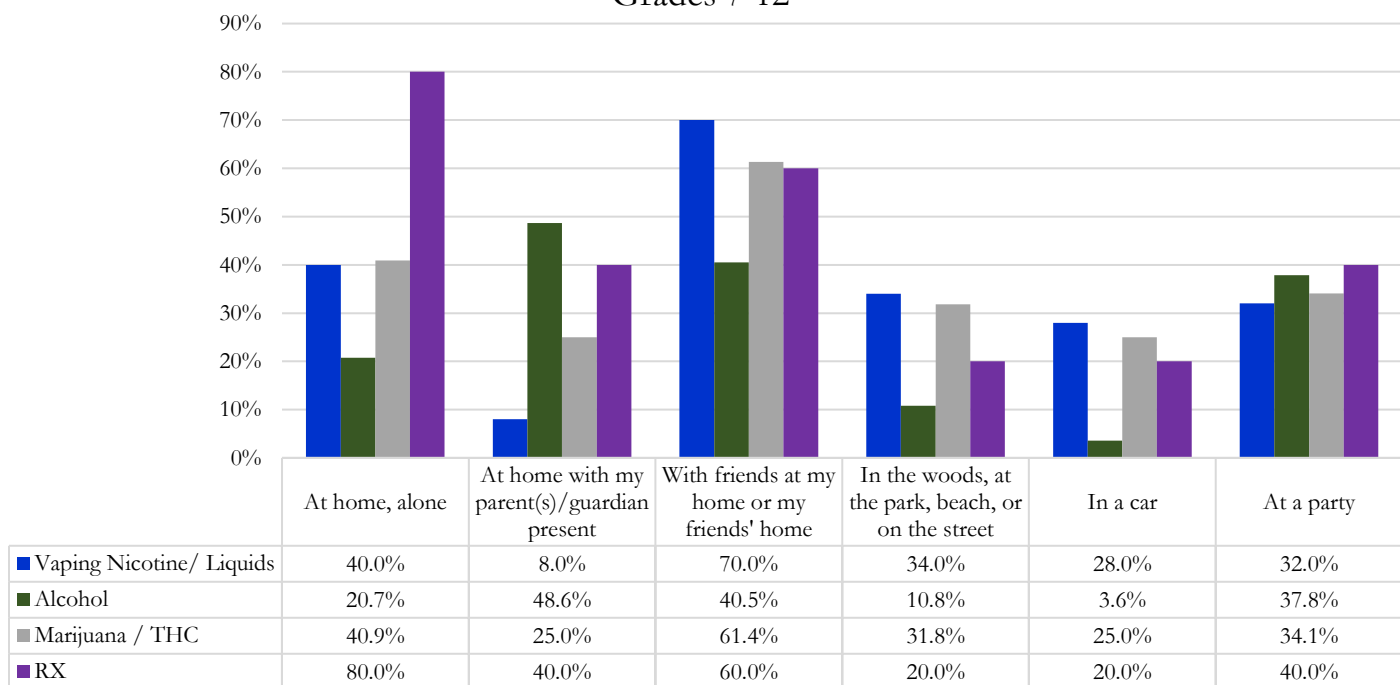
Methods of Marijuana Use Among Youth Who Have Used in the Past 12 Months



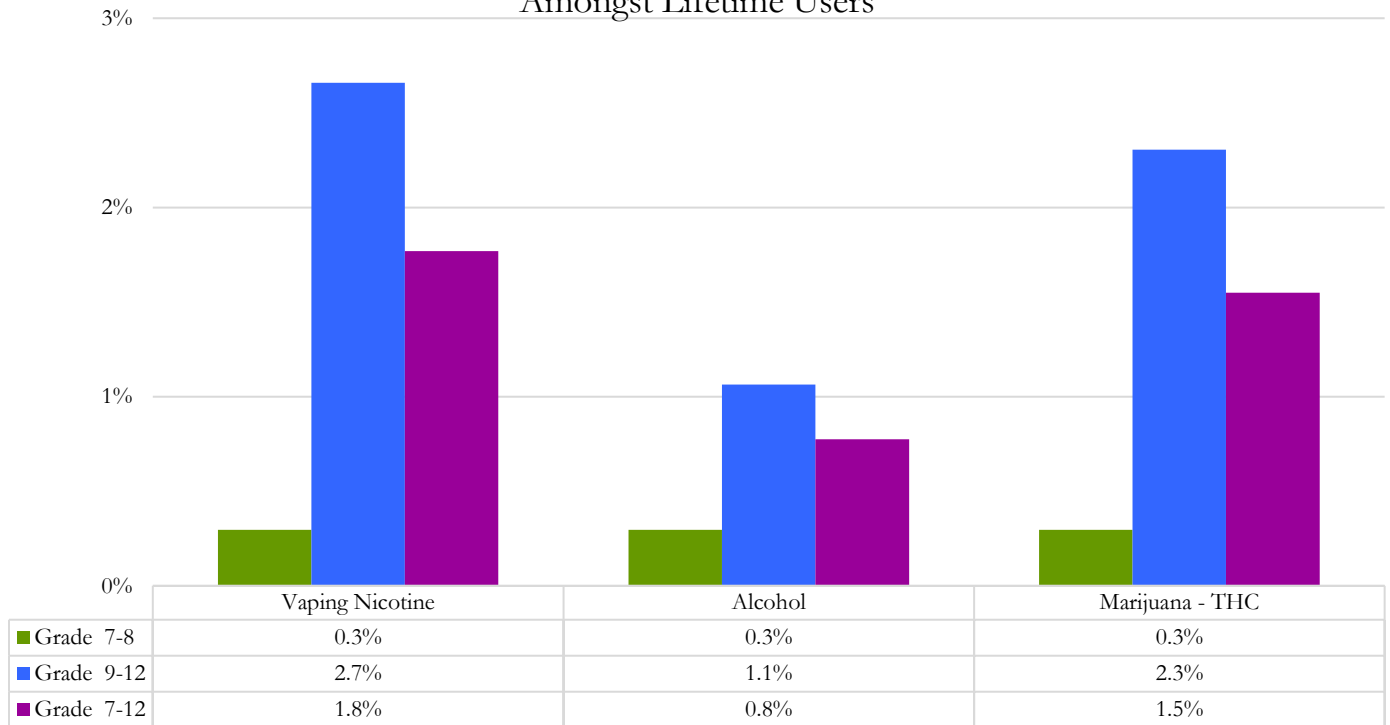
Where Substances Are Acquired Most Often Amongst Lifetime Users Grades 7-12



Where Substances Are Used Most Often Amongst Lifetime Users Grades 7-12

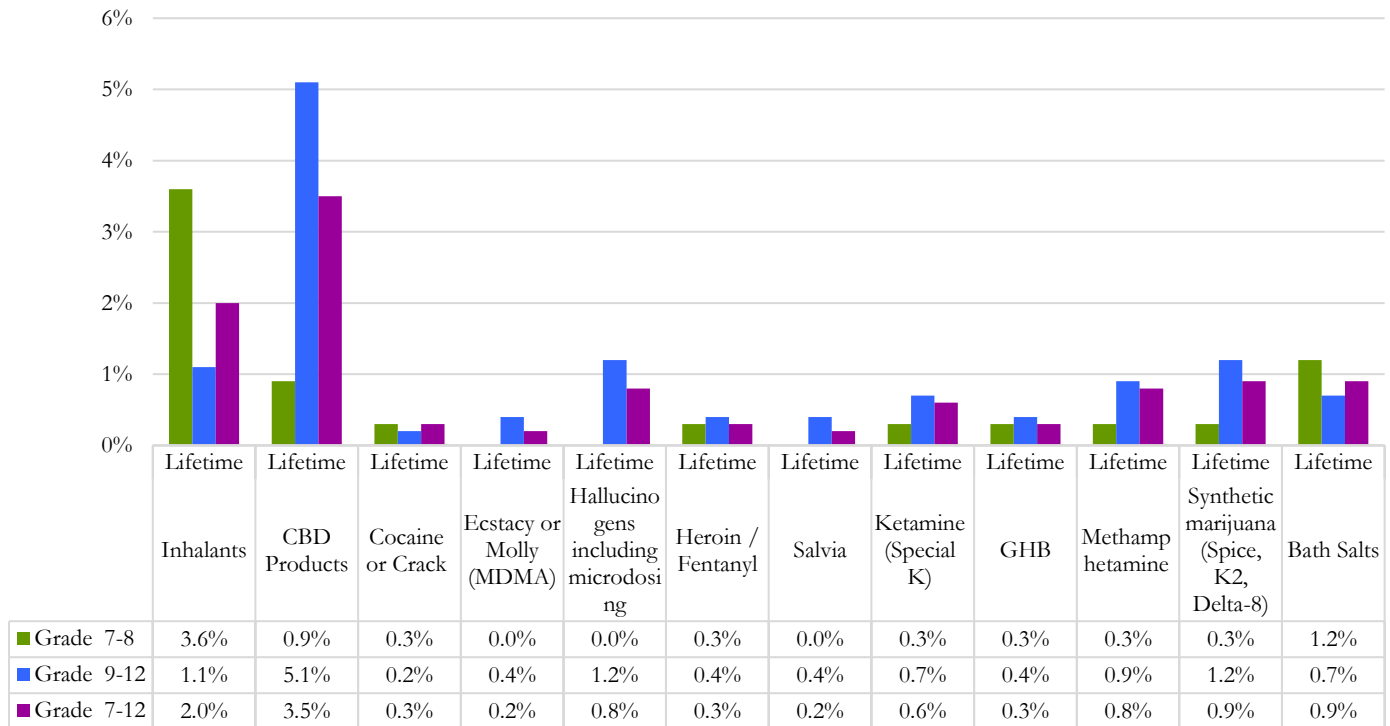


Youth Use of Substances at School- including school events- Amongst Lifetime Users

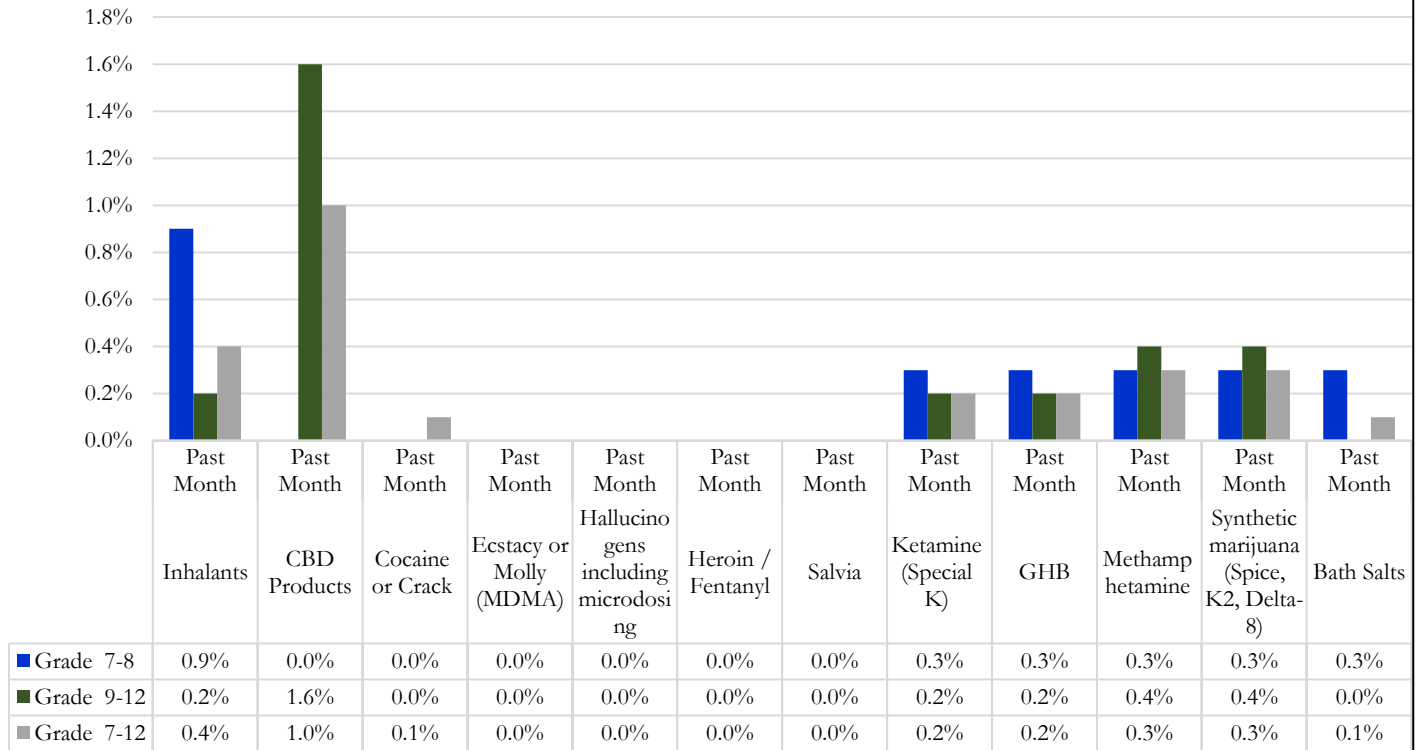


Other Substance Use:

Lifetime Other Substance Use

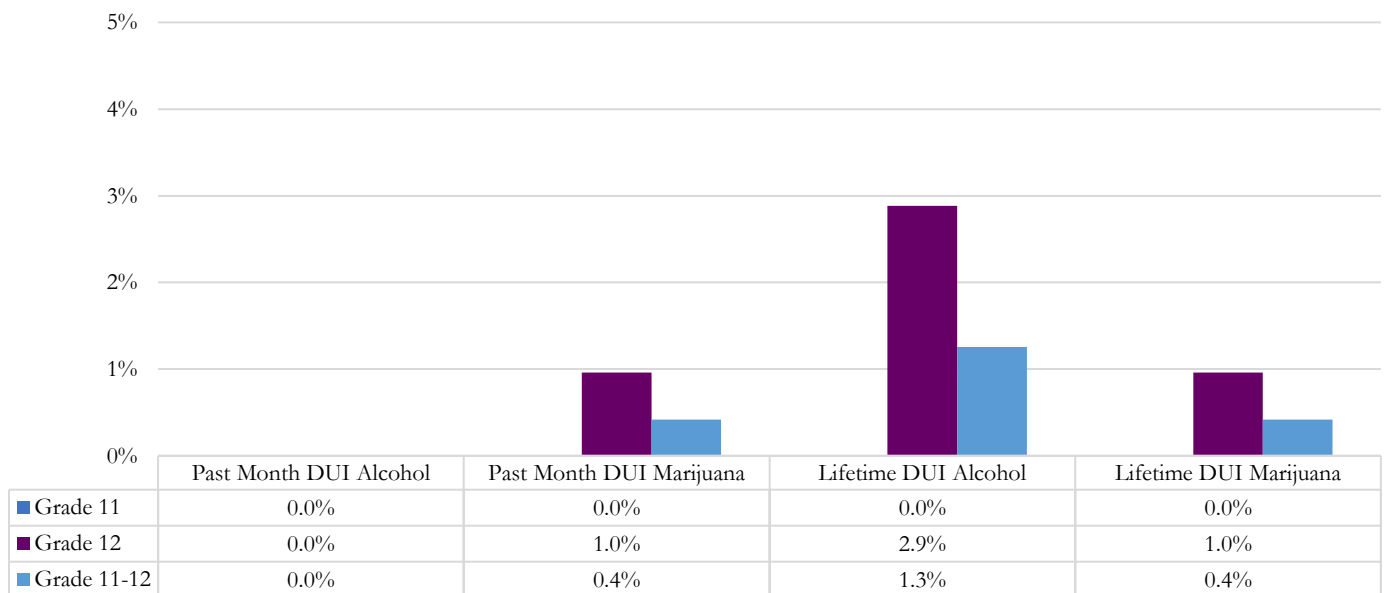


Past Month Other Substance Use

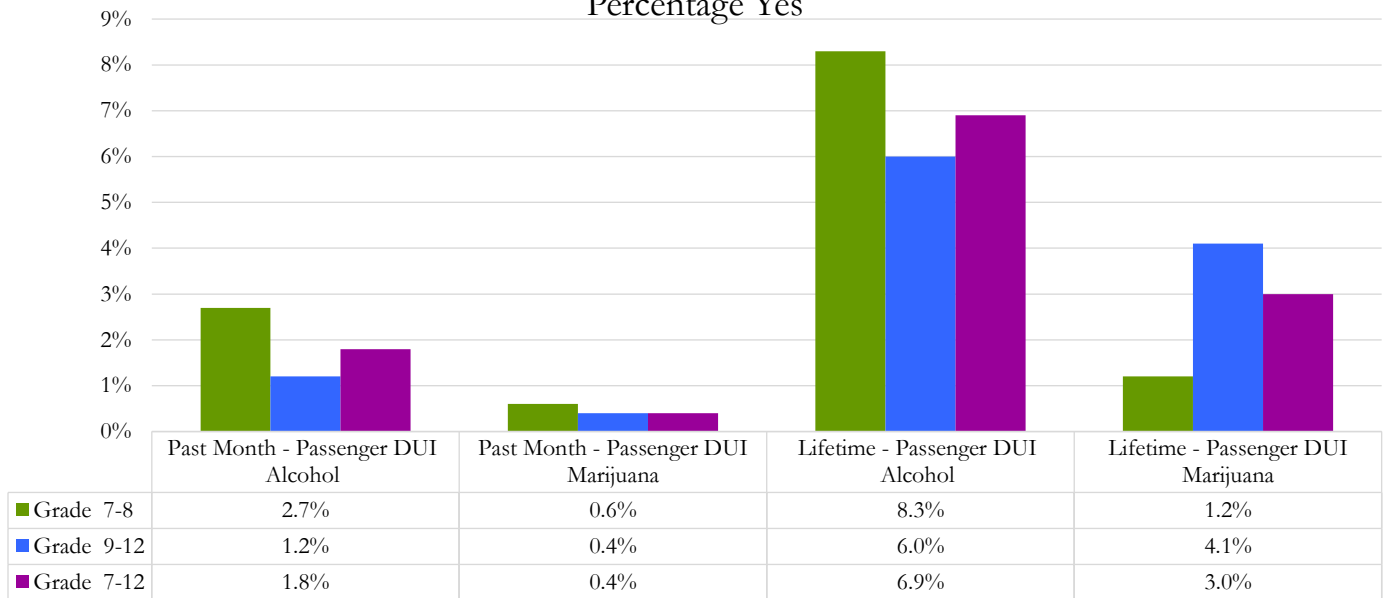


Driving Under the Influence:

Driving Under the Influence Alcohol and Marijuana Grades 11 -12



Passenger of Driver, Age 20 or Younger,
Under the Influence Alcohol and/or Marijuana
Percentage Yes



Ellington Substance Use Rate Trends with 2022 Compared to 2024:

It is important to note when comparing 2017 and 2022 data that the survey tool and administration changed during this time. Youth Voices Count Survey has an instructional video, rather than a teacher script, presented prior to students taking the survey. This video emphasized confidentiality and anonymity, including noting that IP addresses would not be collected.

Additionally, the 2017 survey was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic greatly disrupting lives in Connecticut beginning in March 2020. Thus, comparisons between these two time periods should be interpreted with caution.

Past Month Substance Use and Gambling 2017, 2022 and 2024, Grades 9-12				
	Ellington 2017	Ellington 2022	Ellington 2024	Percent Change 2022-2024
Alcohol	18.2%	6.8%	3.7%	-45.59%
Binge Drinking	10.9%	4.3%	1.4%	-67.44%
Cigarettes	7.0%	0.7%	0%	-100.00%
E-Cigarettes/Vape Products	7.5%	Nicotine- 3.9%	3.2%	-17.95%
		Flavored Liquids- 3.1%	2.5%	-19.35%
Marijuana	12.9%	5.0%	2.5%	-50.00%
Prescription Drugs	2.1%	0.9%	0.2%	-77.78%
Gambling	4.9%	1.4%	1.6%	14.29%

*Note in the 2017 survey e-cigarette use was not separated by use of Nicotine compared to Flavored Liquids.

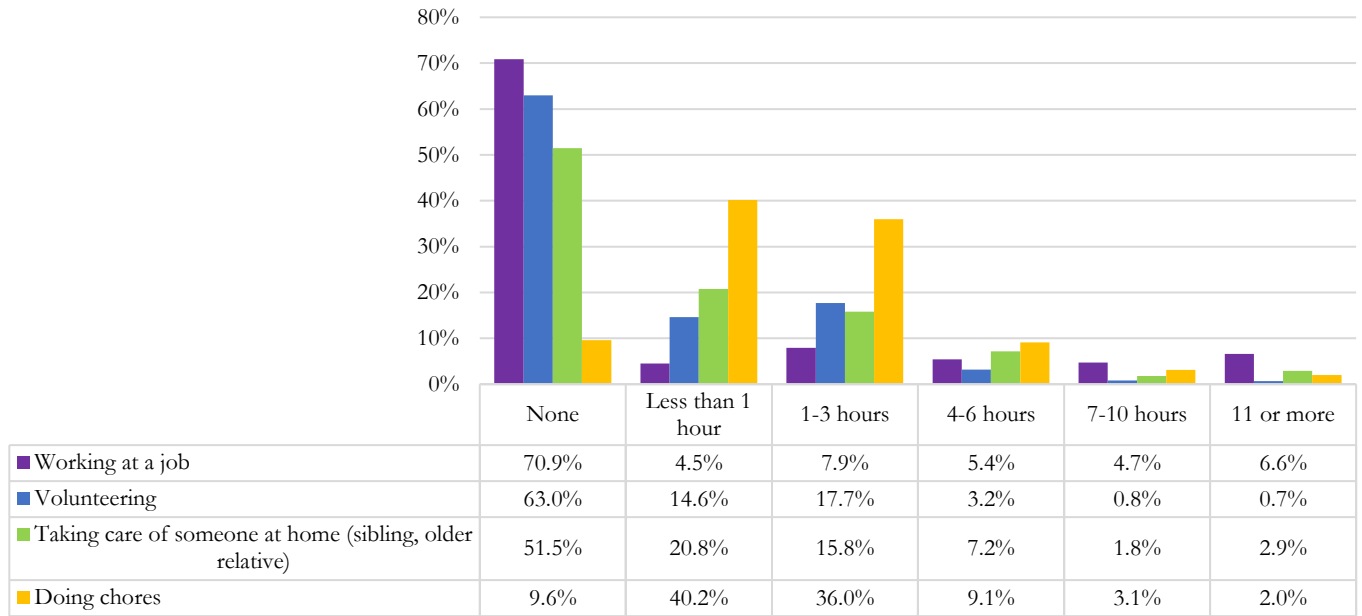
Perception of Risk/Harm (Moderate/Great Risk) 2017, 2022 and 2024, Grades 9-12				
	Ellington 2017	Ellington 2022	Ellington 2024	Percent Change 2022-2024
Alcohol	77.0%	78.9%	76.6%	-2.92%
Cigarettes	84.7%	82.7%	79.3%	-4.11%
E-Cigarettes/Vape Products	56.6%	78.5%	73.9%	-5.86%
Marijuana	51.0%	63.0%	65.6%	4.13%
Prescription Drugs	84.9%	86.9%	84.9%	-2.30%
Gambling	65.9%	75.4%	68.9%	-8.62%

	Perception of Parental Disapproval (Moderately/Greatly Wrong) 2017, 2022 and 2024, Grades 9-12			
	Ellington 2017	Ellington 2022	Ellington 2024	Percent Change 2022-2024
Alcohol	89.8%	89.3%	90.7%	1.57%
Cigarettes	95.0%	94.4%	94.9%	0.53%
E-Cigarettes/Vape Products	86.4%	93.2%	95.5%	2.47%
Marijuana	85.3%	87.7%	89.2%	1.71%
Prescription Drugs	97.0%	95.7%	95.5%	-0.21%
Gambling	84.9%	86.8%	85.3%	-1.73%

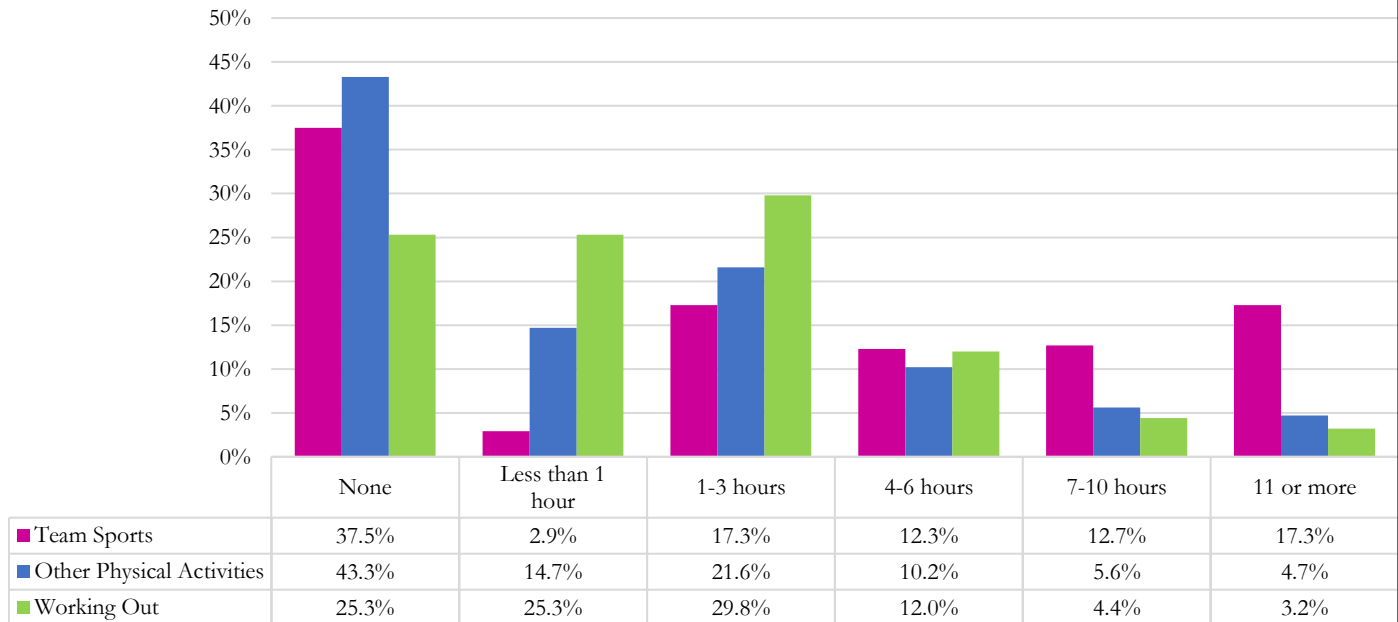
	Perception of Friends/Peer Disapproval (Moderately/Greatly Wrong) 2017 and 2022, Grades 9-12			
	Ellington 2017	Ellington 2022	Ellington 2024	Percent Change 2022-2024
Alcohol	55.7%	71.5%	78.2%	9.37%
Cigarettes	71.6%	76.3%	83.3%	9.17%
E-Cigarettes/Vape Products	53.5%	63.9%	76.3%	19.41%
Marijuana	40.3%	65.1%	76.5%	17.51%
Prescription Drugs	78.5%	83.8%	87.7%	4.65%
Gambling	57.0%	67.3%	68.3%	1.49%

Extracurricular Activities:

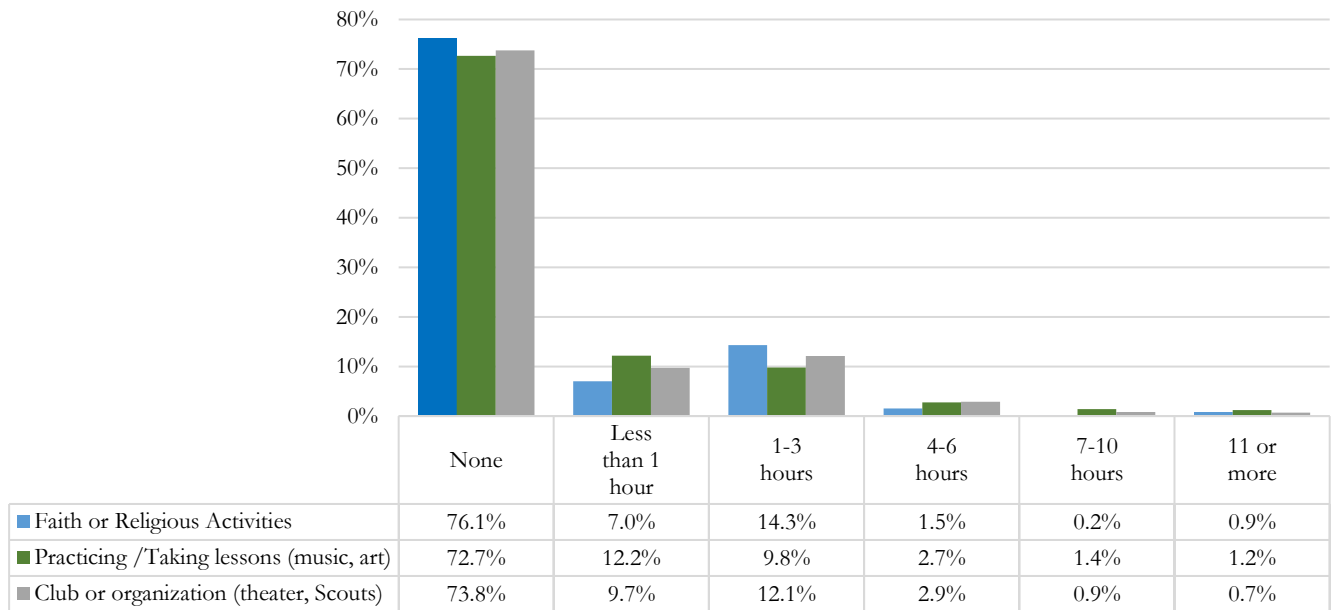
Time Spent on Jobs & Volunteering, Weekly
Grades 7-12



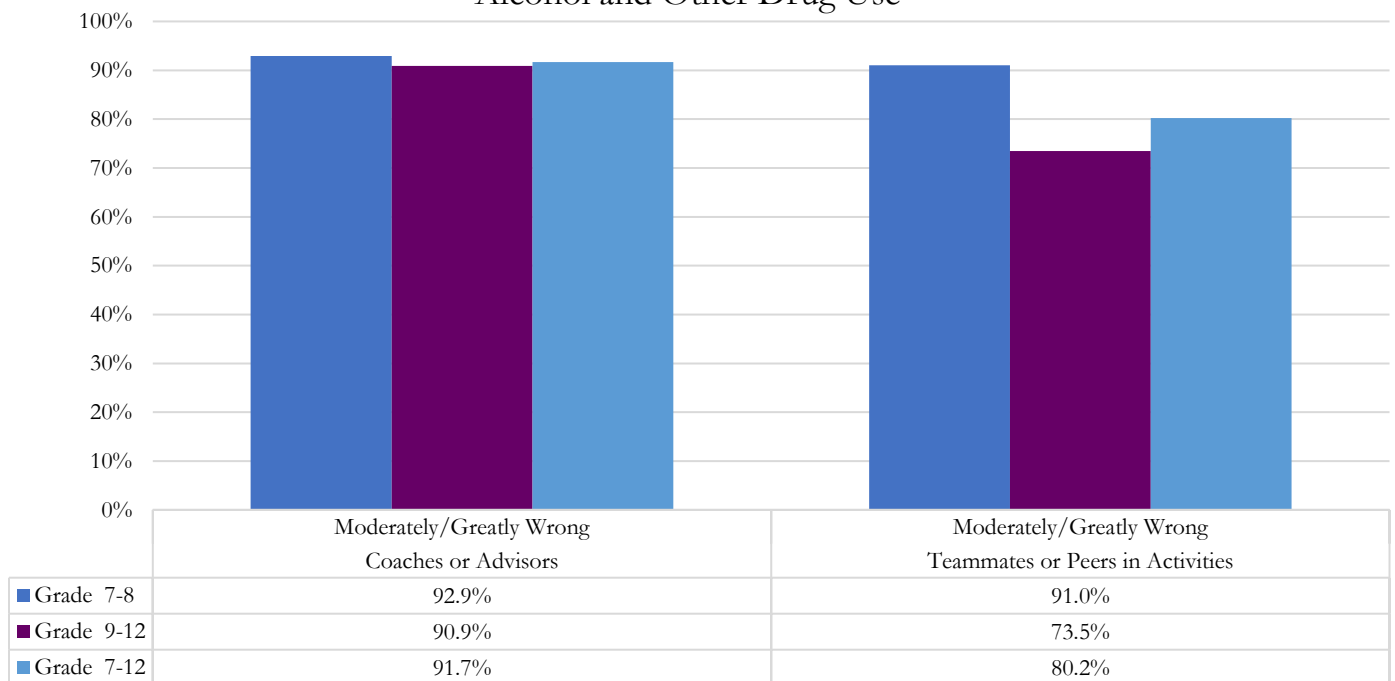
Time Spent on Physical Activities, Weekly
Grades 7-12



Time Spent on Faith-based Activities, Taking Lessons, Clubs or Orgs, Weekly, Grades 7-12



Perception of Coaches/Advisors and Teammates/Peers Disapproval of Alcohol and Other Drug Use



*HS Hispanic youth perceive less coach or advisor disapproval of substance use more frequently than white youth.

*HS transgender, non-binary, or unsure youth perceive less coach or advisor disapproval of substance use more frequently than cisgender youth.

Youth Interest in Survey Results:

