



Results of 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

Key Findings and Recommended Action Steps

SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATION: September 17, 2019

Background and Methodology

- **The MWAH Survey is an initiative of the Metrowest Health Foundation focused on improving adolescent health and wellness through data driven advancements in prevention efforts, programs, and policies**
- **Survey data strengthens school and community efforts to better understand, prioritize, and address physical and mental health challenges facing our students**
- **Needham uses data to monitor trends, identify emerging health issues, and reflect on progress and set priorities for coming years**
- **The survey is administered every other year; parents/guardians informed and given a choice to opt out their child(ren); student participation is voluntary and protocols are in place to protect privacy**
- **Needham has participated in the MWAHS at the middle school level Grades 7-8 and high school level since 2006 and expanded survey administration to Grade 6 in 2018; 19 of 25 communities who participate include Grade 6; 94% participation rate**

Key Health Indicators and Emerging Trends



Key Health Indicators

- Substance Abuse
- Violence
- Bullying
- Mental Health
- Physical Activity
- Protective Factors

Emerging Trends

- Electronic vapor products
- Stress and anxiety
- Social media use

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

Substance Use



Middle School Students

- Cigarette smoking has declined from 7% in 2006 to 2% in 2018
- Lifetime alcohol use in Grades 7 and 8: declined from 20% in 2006 to 11% in 2018; and current use declined from 8% in 2006 to 4% in 2018
- Alcohol use increases by grade: Lifetime use increases from 5% in 6th grade to 12% in 8th grade; current drinking increases from 1% in 6th grade to 4% in 8th grade
- Marijuana lifetime use remains steady at 1-2% in 2018 compared to 5% in 2006

High School Students

- Cigarette smoking has declined from 29% in 2006 to 11% in 2018
- Alcohol use in high school has declined substantially: From 2006 to 2018, lifetime use decreased from 66% to 49% and current use decreased from 45% to 29%
- Marijuana use has remained relatively steady from 32% in 2010 to 29% in 2018
- Lifetime misuse of prescription drugs decreased from 11% in 2006 to 4% in 2018

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

Substance Use



Middle School Students

E-Cigarettes and VAPING

- 5% of youth have tried an electronic vapor product (EVP) in their lifetime, and 3% used EVPs in the past 30 days
- Lifetime EVP use increases from 1% in 6th grade to 8% in 8th grade, and current use increases from 1% in 6th grade to 3-4% in 7th and 8th grade
- Despite the increase in EVP use, perception of risk rose from 73% in 2014 to 83% in 2018

High School Students

E-Cigarettes & VAPING

- 35% of youth have used electronic vapor products (EVPs) in their lifetime, and 23% used EVPS in the past 30 days
- EVP use has increased rapidly in the last two years: The proportion of youth who ever tried EVPs increased from 26% in 2016 to 35% in 2018
- Nearly one in ten 12th grade students (8%) report daily use
- Despite the increase in EVP use, perception of risk rose steadily from 42% in 2014 to 71% in 2018

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

Bullying and Cyberbullying



Middle School Students

- School bullying victimization is slightly higher in 2018 (14%) compared to 2010 (10%) but remains substantially lower than 2006 (41%)
- Cyberbullying has decreased from 17% in 2006 to 11% in 2018
- Youth with learning and/or physical disabilities are more likely to be bullied at school than youth without disabilities (24% vs 14%)

High School Students

- School bullying victimization declined from a high of 27% in 2008 to 11% in 2018
- Cyberbullying has remained relatively steady at 15% since 2006
- LGBTQ youth are more likely to be bullied (18%) compared with heterosexual cisgender youth (10%)
- Youth with learning and/or physical disabilities are twice as likely to be bullied at school than youth without disabilities (18% vs 9%)

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

Mental Health

Middle School Students

- Reports of life being stressful have remained relatively steady since 2006 (12% vs 14%)
- Females continue to report higher levels of stress and are much more likely to report life being stressful compared to males (18% vs 7%)
- Reports of mental health problems (depressive symptoms, self-injury, and suicidality) have remained similar in recent surveys
- Youth with disabilities report more mental health problems than without: depressive symptoms (22% vs 7%), self injury (18% vs 5%) and considering suicide (25% vs 6%)

High School Students

- Reports of life being stressful are lower in 2018 (32%) compared with 2016 (38%) with prior reports ranging from 25-32%
- Females continue to report higher levels of stress and are much more likely to report life being stressful compared to males (44% vs 19%)
- Reports of mental health problems (depressive symptoms, self-injury, and suicidality) are slightly lower over the past two surveys
- LGBTQ youth are more likely to report depressive symptoms (33% vs 11%), self-injury (25% vs 7%), and suicidal ideation (27% vs 7%)
- Youth with disabilities also report more mental health problems than without: depressive symptoms (24% vs 11%), self injury (17% vs 7%) and considering suicide (16% vs 7%)

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

Social Media



Middle School Students

Time Spent Online, Social Media Use, and Gaming

- 42% of youth spend 3 or more hours online on the average school day – a substantial increase from 2010 (19%)
- Time on social media is correlated with reports of cyberbullying victimization, substance use and mental health problems

High School Students

Time Spent Online, Social Media Use, and Gaming

- 64% of youth spend 3 or more hours online on the average school day – a substantial increase from 2010 (35%)
- Time on social media is correlated with reports of cyberbullying victimization, substance use and mental health problems.

Distracted Drivers:

- 28% of youth rode in a car with high school driver who was texting in the past 30 days and 31% of 11th and 12th grade drivers report texting while driving

Key Finding: 2006-2018 Trend

ADULT SUPPORT as a PROTECTIVE FACTOR



Middle School Students

- About three-quarters of youth report being engaged in and connected with their school Grades 6-8
- For Grades 7-8, school attachment is slightly lower in 2018 after remaining stable in recent surveys; for example 67% of students reported feeling happy to be at school compared to 77% in 2016
- 74% of youth have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to if they have a problem, and 96% of youth have a parent or other adult outside of school to talk to about things that are important to them

High School Students

- Over two-thirds of youth report being engaged in and connected with their school; remaining steady since 2006
- School attachment and adult support at school increased from 60% in 2006 to 72% in 2016 and further rose in 2018
- 75% of youth have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to if they have a problem, and 94% of youth have a parent or other adult outside of school to talk to about things that are important to them

Recommended Action Steps

Education and Awareness

- Dangers of vaping
- Time spent online
- Stress and Mental Health

Expand and/or refine programs, supports, and interventions

- Bullying Prevention Programs
- Social Emotional Learning
- Student Led Groups (e.g. SALSA, SAFE)

Leverage efforts to support positive inclusive school cultures

- Subgroup vulnerabilities

Resources and Partnerships

Middlesex Partnership for Youth

<https://massachusettspartnershipsfor youth.com/>

SPAN

<https://www.spanneedham.org/Needham>

Needham Youth and Family Services

<http://www.needhamma.gov/79/Youth-Family-ServicesCollaborative for Academic,>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning

<https://casel.org/Safe and Supportive Schools>

Safe and Supportive Schools

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/>

Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

NPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

http://www.needham.k12.ma.us/departments/student_support_services/bullying_prevention_and_intervention