

SUMMARY REPORT

WISCONSIN **Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

2021



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

SUMMARY REPORT

2021 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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WHAT IS THE YRBS?

The 2021 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was conducted as part of a national effort by the CDC to monitor the health risk behaviors of the nation's high school students. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has administered the YRBS to a representative sample of Wisconsin high school students every two years beginning in 1993. While it is usually administered in the spring of odd numbered years, the 2021 YRBS was delayed to the autumn due to COVID-19 complications earlier in the year.

The YRBS is a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire students take in a proctored environment during the school day. In 2021 the questionnaire included six new questions bringing it to 90 questions in total, and participating schools were allowed to add one of four optional modules. Survey procedures were designed to protect the privacy of students by allowing anonymous and voluntary participation. Local parent/caregiver permission procedures were followed before administration, including informing parents/caregivers that their child's participation was voluntary.

The 2021 Wisconsin YRBS contained new questions on the following topic areas: student employment, neglect, family mental health, exposure to violence, and COVID-19. Such questions provide new windows into the issues facing young people, including disaggregation of the data by economic indicators (access to food) and special education.

The data used for this report are based on a scientific sample representative of all public high school students in Wisconsin. The 2021 state sample includes responses from 1,838 students in 43 public, charter, and alternative high schools in Wisconsin during the autumn of 2021. The school response rate was 86%, the student response rate was 81%, and the overall response rate was 70%.

The weighted demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows:

Gender	
Female	48.6%
Male	51.4%

Grade Level	
9th grade	25.3%
10th grade	24.8%
11th grade	24.7%
12th grade	24.7%
Other	0.4%

Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander*	2.8%
Black/African-American*	8.8%
Hispanic/Latinx	12.4%
Multiple (two or more races selected)*	5.0%
White*	70.1%
All other races*	0.9%

*Non-Hispanic

IN THEIR OWN VOICES

A small number of YRBS respondents across all YRBS surveys (meaning both the surveys included in the state sample and the surveys used for local data) were randomly selected and invited to offer open-ended feedback on the survey and the topics covered. This feedback is used to help DPI review the questionnaire and better understand the lived experiences behind the numbers. Here are some of the responses from students that help illustrate some of the results in this report. Quotes are presented here as originally written and are not corrected for spelling or grammar.

Adults need to understand that adolescents don't see that people are truly there to help them. Adults try to tell us "How we really feel" and don't take time to truly listen. And when we say, "I'm ok." we are usually lying. We need help, we want help, we just don't know how to ask for it.

Racism is a very big topic at my school and I think it's not ever going to get better... its the root of many of my problems and I want it to stop... I just want to get my education in peace and not deal with racism that isn't being stopped by teachers... that is why I trust no adults at this school

Sometimes at my school i feel i have to work 10 times harder for what i want because of my skin color and i sometimes i do feel they give the white people more opportunities...

LGBTQ+ misunderstandings and discrimination are a problem... At my school students and teachers are completely homophobic...They also give us looks (teachers and students) of disgust. Wake up, it's 2021 get over it.



KEY FINDINGS

Compared with prior years, most YRBS indicators are statistically unchanged, but there are certain exceptions (e.g., depression). Moreover, Wisconsin's results do show notable decreases in smoking and traditional tobacco products, along with an increase in vaping or electronic tobacco products. While promising trends are evident across alcohol and tobacco use, pockets of concern persist, especially around alcohol use, prescription drug use, and vaping.

Screen use continues to increase. Positive health indicators such as sleep and eating breakfast continue to decline. Depression increased, and other mental health issues remain high, though not statistically higher than in 2019. Students report their health and belonging at school have dropped. There are also some indicators of a declining sense of physical safety. However, the 2021 YRBS did show positive increases in overall rates of physical activity.

Some student groups show consistently higher risks across topic areas.

Overall, the following groups generally report fewer supports and more challenges:

- Females*
- Students of color
- Students with physical disabilities or chronic health conditions
- Students receiving special education services
- Students facing food insecurity (i.e., hunger due to a lack of food at home)
- Students who have moved many times (4 or more times)
- Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)
- Students with low grades (D's or F's)

This list reflects statistical patterns in the YRBS data, but individual differences still matter. A student who is not in any of these groups may still face significant challenges and need additional support. Conversely, a student who falls into one or more of the categories listed above can still thrive, especially in a supportive and responsive setting. Rather than painting a picture of students who are damaged, the results provide a window into some of the many invisible struggles that so many strong and capable young people contend with every day.

**Females generally report both higher levels of support and higher levels of challenge or risk factors.*

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Positive influences have been described as assets or protective factors. These assets have the power to protect youth from risk behaviors and some forms of victimization, as well as promote healthy behaviors and general well-being. Historically, Wisconsin high school students have reported high levels of assets. In both 2019 and again in 2021, students reported some decreases to what have generally been high levels of social support and belonging.

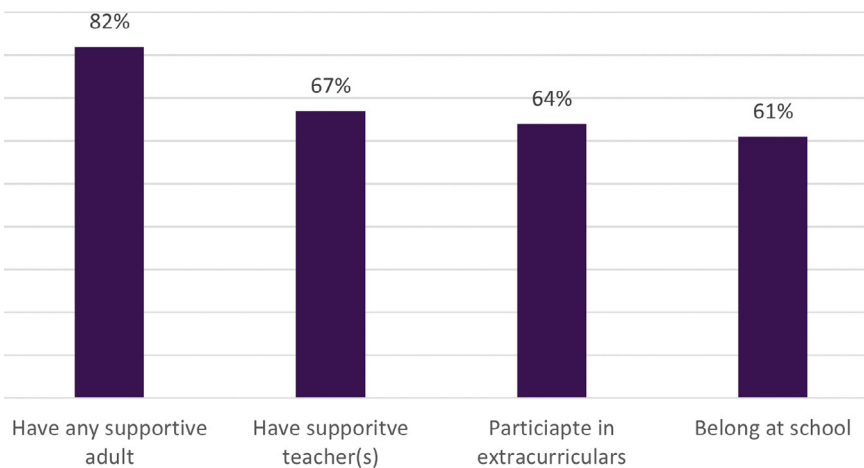
Generally, students who report having strong adult support, as well as high levels of school and extracurricular participation and belonging, are less likely to engage in risky behaviors (e.g., physical fights, carrying a weapon, alcohol and drug use, risky sexual behavior) and more likely to report positive mental health and higher grades.

- Overall, 60.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they belong at their school; statistically unchanged since

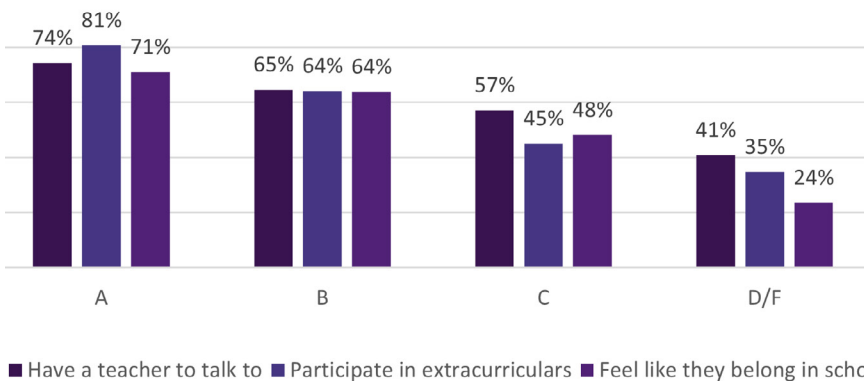
2019 (61.1%) but a significant decrease since 2017 (70.8%).

- A new question was added in 2019 and continued in 2021, asking students how many adults—besides their parents—they felt comfortable talking to about a problem in their lives. 82.4% of students had at least one such “supportive adult” in their lives. There was no statistically significant difference in these rates for males or females, however, White students (85.1%) were

Prevalance of Protective Factors



School Inclusion and Belonging, By Self-Reported Grades



PROTECTIVE FACTORS (cont'd)

more likely to have a supportive adult than Hispanic/Latinx (76.9%) or Black students (76.6%).

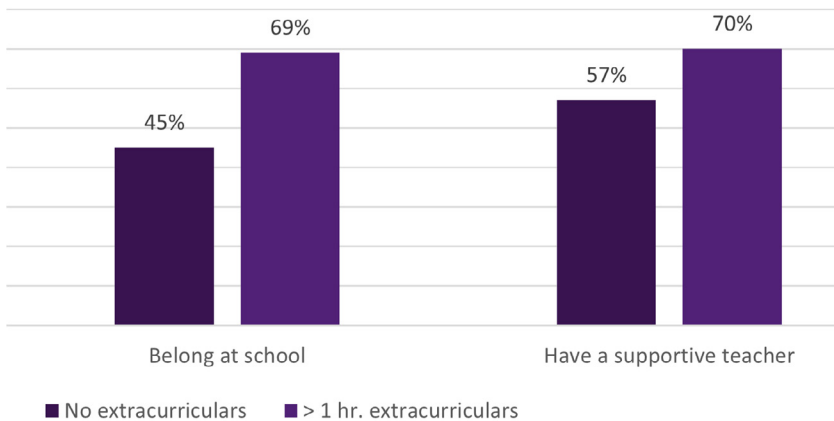
- 67.1% of students reported having at least one teacher or other adult at school they could talk to. That figure was highest for students getting A's (74.2%). Students with low grades (D's or F's) were least likely to report having a teacher to talk to (40.8%).
- 67.1% of students participate in school extracurricular

activities, including sports, the arts, or other groups or clubs. Students in extracurriculars were 1.5 times more likely to feel like they belonged at school (69.3% in extracurricular activities vs. 45.1% not in extracurricular activities) and less likely to report depression (28.1% in extracurricular activities vs. 43.4% not in extracurricular activities) and anxiety (47.8% in extracurricular activities vs. 60.3% not in extracurricular activities). Efforts to expand

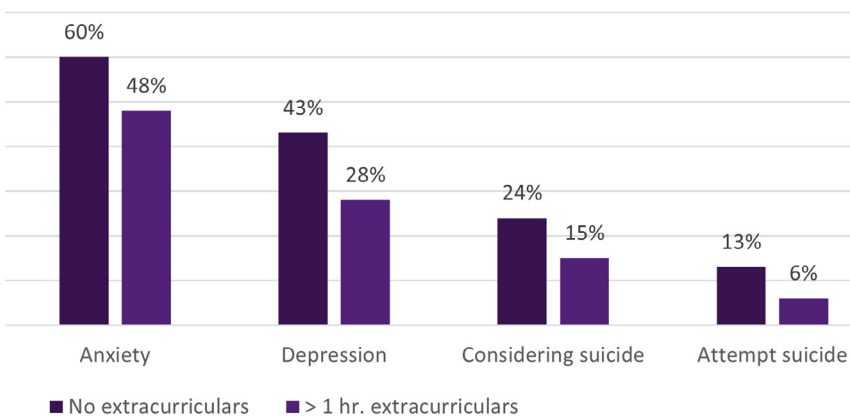
extracurricular opportunities, especially to low-income and other marginalized student groups who are underrepresented, (Putnam, 2015) are highly recommended.

- Being involved in extracurriculars is associated with better mental health outcomes and a stronger sense of belonging.

School Belonging and Protective Factors, By Extracurricular Involvement



Mental Health Concerns and Suicidality, By Extracurricular Involvement

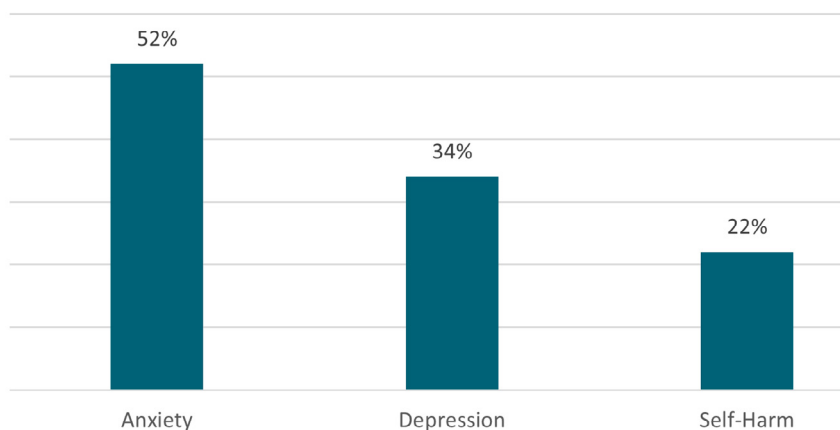


MENTAL HEALTH

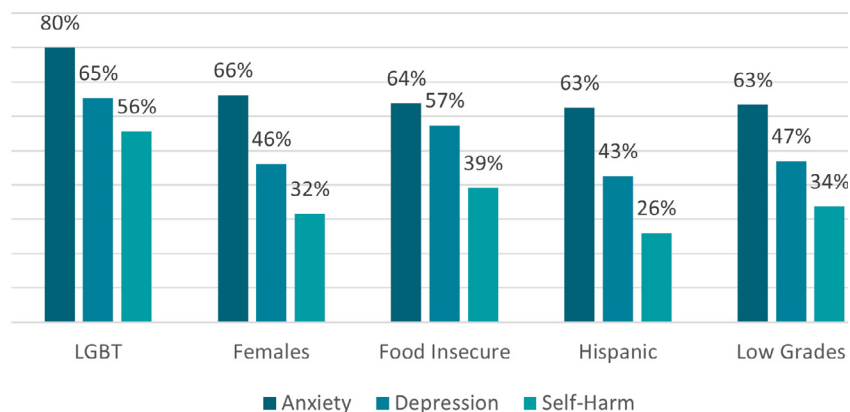
Mental and emotional well-being are paramount to school success. While many factors outside of school can influence a student's mental and emotional well-being, school environments can also influence a student's positive or negative mental health. The 2019 YRBS included questions related to depression, anxiety, and non-suicidal self-harm.

- More than one in two students reported anxiety (52.2%). While statistically unchanged from 2019 (49%), this is a significant increase from 2017 (39.9%).
- One in three students reported depression (33.7), a statistically significant increase from 2019. This continues a long-term trend, with the percentage of students reporting depression in 2021 more than 11% higher than in 2011.
- One in five students reported non-suicidal self-harm (21.7%), a rate that, while unchanged from 2019 (18.5%), has increased over the last 10 years (17.2% in 2011).
- There were no statistical decreases in anxiety for any racial or ethnic group compared to 2019 levels.
- The majority of Wisconsin high school students (58.1%) reported experiencing one or more of the following in the past 12 months: depression, anxiety, self-harm, or suicidal ideation.
- Students who identify as LGBT, students with food insecurity, Hispanic/Latinx students, and students with low grades reported the highest rates of mental health concerns (see chart below).

Self-Reported Rates of Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Harm



Mental Health Concerns For Select Groups



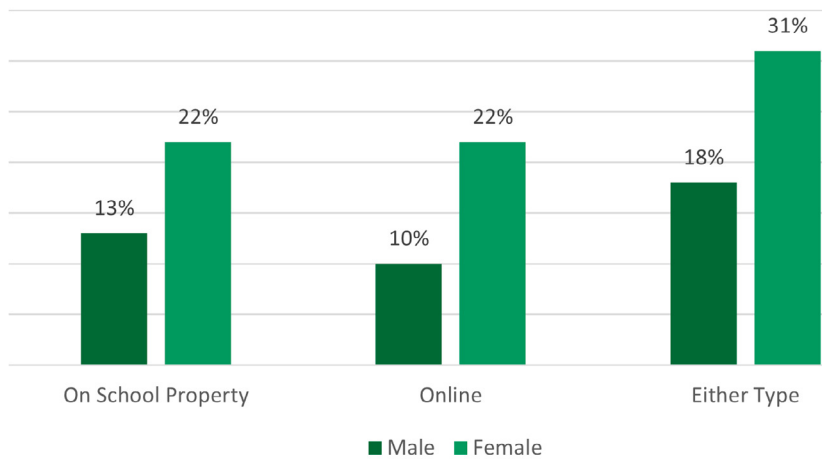
BULLYING

The Wisconsin YRBS asks students about being bullied at school as well as being bullied online during the past 12 months.

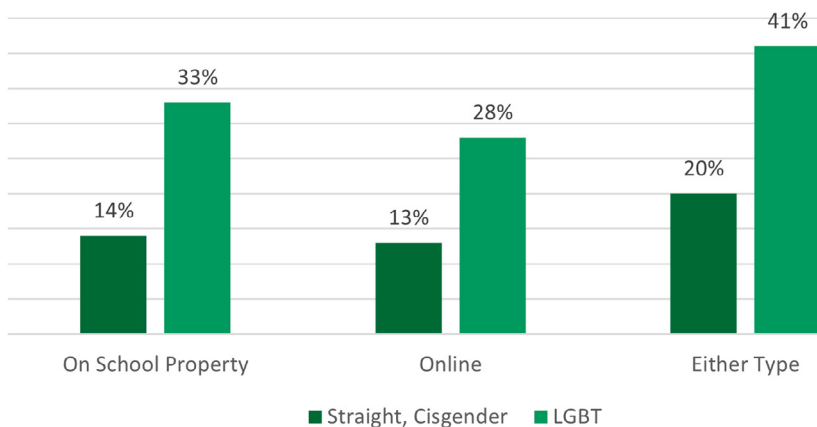
- 18% of students report being bullied on school property, and 16.1% of students report being bullied online (e.g., through social media or text).
- There is a notable gender gap in rates of bullying, with females reporting much higher rates of both in-person and e-bullying than males.
- Rates of bullying on school property* have declined significantly since 2019. Rates of electronic bullying remain statistically unchanged across all prior years.

*Listed as "in-person" bullying in some YRBS reports.

Experiences of Different Types of Bullying By Sex



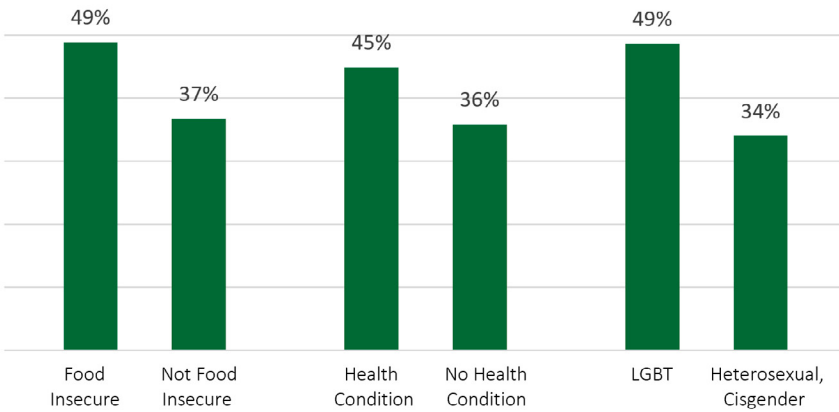
Experiences of Different Types of Bullying By Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity



BULLYING (cont'd)

- Some student groups are more likely than their peers to see bullying as a problem at their school. The chart below shows these differences for three notable groups and their comparison groups: students who have experienced hunger in the past 30 days (“Food Insecure”), students with physical disabilities or chronic health conditions, and Hispanic/Latinx students.

View Bullying as a Problem at School For Select Groups



SUICIDE AND HELP SEEKING

The YRBS asks students a series of questions about suicidal thoughts and behaviors during the past 12 months, each with greater severity.

- 18.1% seriously considered suicide.
- 14.8% made a plan.
- 8.5% attempted suicide.
- Rates of suicidality across all three categories remain statistically unchanged from 2019 results, even across all racial and ethnic groups. In 2019, Black students reported a significant decrease in

suicidality, and these rates remained unchanged in 2021.

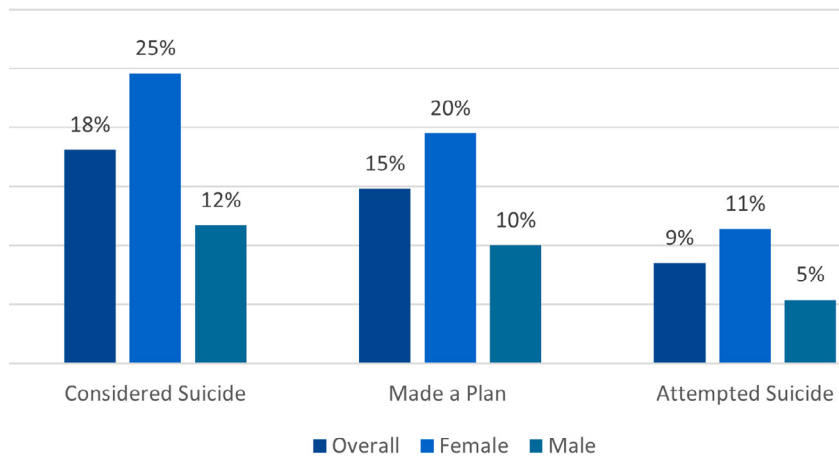
- However, when looking at 10-year trends, rates of considering suicide and making a plan about suicide have increased significantly. This increase in suicidality in the last decade has erased the positive declines that took place in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Seeking and finding help is an important component of mental health. Starting in 2017, students taking the YRBS were asked whether they received the kind of help they needed when they felt

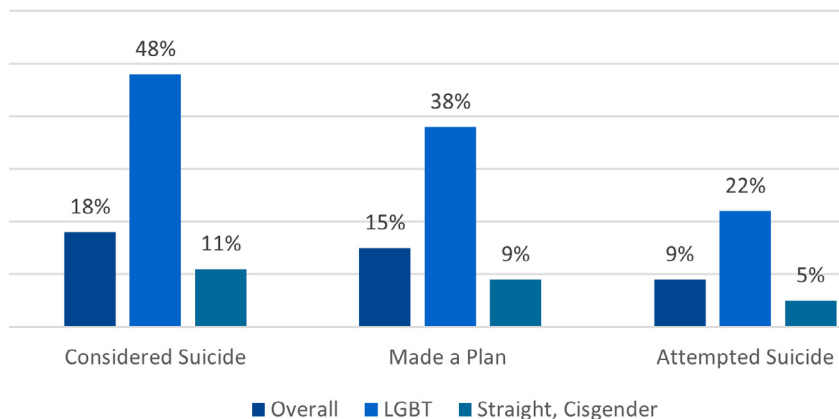
distressed. In 2021, fewer than one in four students who felt sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious agreed that they received the help they needed “most of the time” or “always.” While statistically unchanged from 2019, this rate has decreased since 2017.

- When asked who they are most likely to seek out for emotional support, students are most likely to turn to a friend or sibling (42.8%). Meanwhile, 23.9% of students reported a parent, teacher, or other adult, while 15.4% of students were not sure.

Suicide Ideation: Overall and By Sex



Suicide Ideation: Overall and By Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity



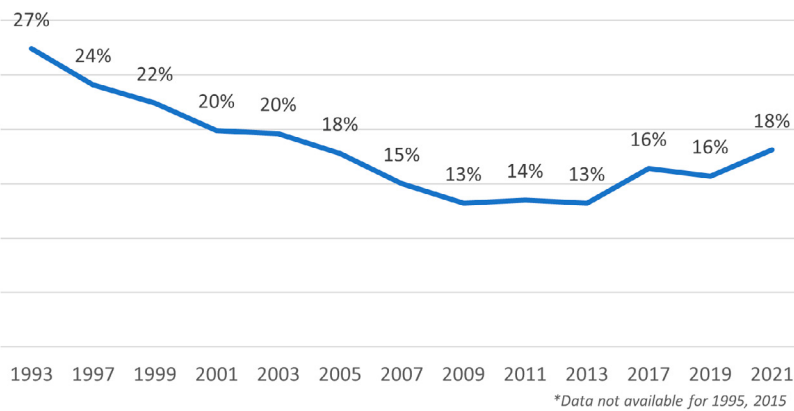
SUICIDE AND HELP SEEKING (cont'd)

- Some student groups are more likely to seriously consider suicide than they are to receive the help they need when distressed. The chart below shows the most pronounced cases of this “help gap”.

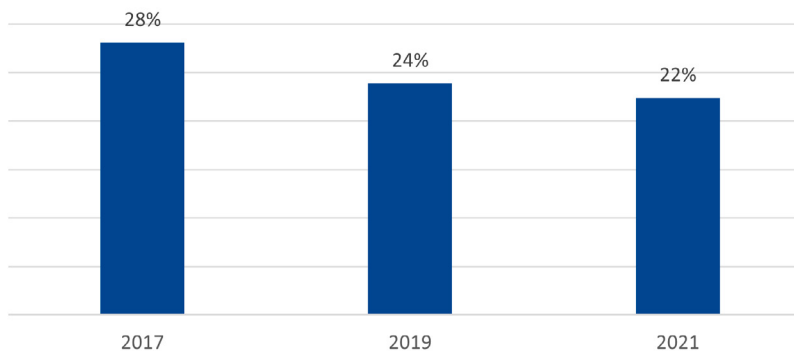
For instance, 47.6% of students who are LGBT have seriously considered suicide, but only 17.8% of students who are LGBT say they mostly or always receive the help they need when in emotional distress.

The gap is similar for students facing food insecurity (40.8% considering suicide while only 9.5% receive the help they need.)

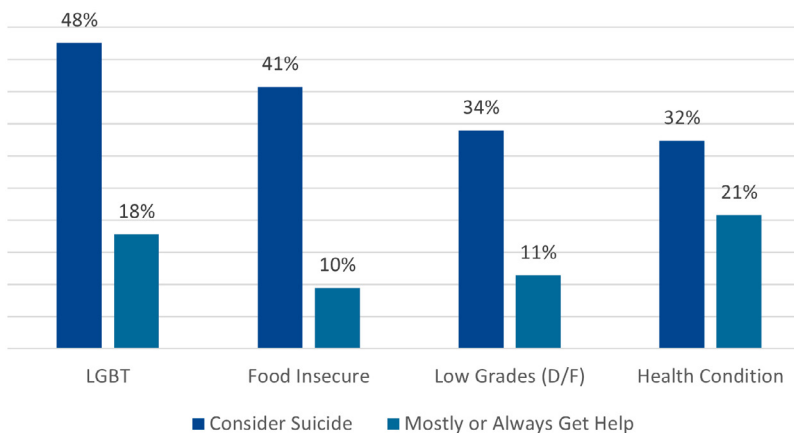
Percentage of Students Who Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide, 1993-2021*



Student Who Most of the Time or Always Receive the Help They Need



Suicidality Help Gap for Select Groups



SCREEN USE AND ONLINE BEHAVIOR

Like adults, young people spend much of their time online or otherwise in front of a screen; daily reported screen time continues to increase. Following CDC’s recommendations, the 2021 Wisconsin YRBS changed its question on technology use from recreational screen use excluding television to instead asking students the number of hours spent on any type of recreational screen usage, including time spent watching television. Screen usage does not include time spent on a computer doing schoolwork.

The 2021 YRBS also included two other questions related to screens and online behavior: the first question asked how many school nights students were online or otherwise using screens between midnight and 5:00 a.m. This was intended to capture the extent to which screen use was interfering

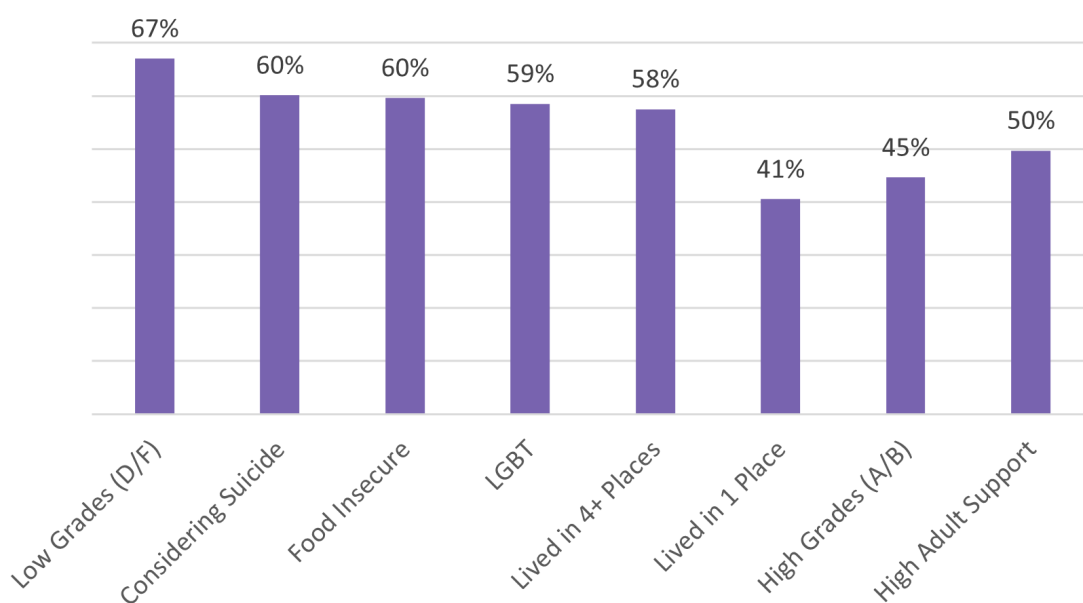
with sleep. The second question was aimed at “sexting”; it asked students how many times in the past 30 days they sent, received, or shared nude photos or other sexual images.

- Three-quarters of all students (75.1%) reported three or more hours of recreational time in front of a TV, computer, smartphone, or other electronic device each day (not counting time spent on schoolwork). This reflects a pattern of increasing screen usage; the previous question on recreational screen time, excluding television, had been steadily increasing since it was first asked in 2007.
- More than half of students (51.2%) reported using screens after midnight at least one school night per week.

Approximately one in six students (17.3%) reports such use every school night.

- Rates of screen use at night were identical for both males and females (51.1% each).
- While using screens after midnight is common for all groups, it is more common for some groups of students than others. Those who are most likely to use screens after midnight include students who are LGBT, students facing hunger (“food insecure”), those who’ve lived in four or more places, students of color, and students with low grades. Students who are depressed, anxious, and suicidal are also more likely to use screens after midnight. Conversely, students with high levels of adult support (i.e., three or more

Screens After Midnight for Select Groups



SCREEN USE AND ONLINE BEHAVIOR (cont'd)

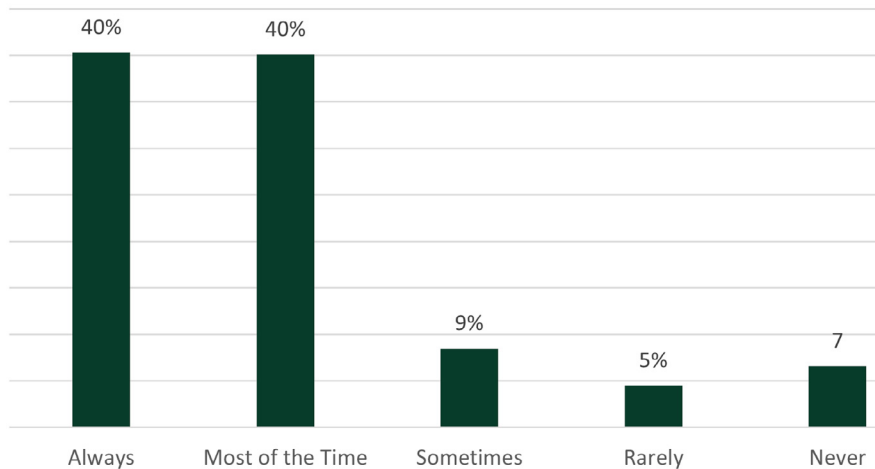
- supportive adults), high grades, and high stability (e.g., fewer moves and no food insecurity) are less likely to use screens after midnight.
 - Students with low grades (D's or F's) are 1.5 times more likely than students with high grades (A's or B's) to use screens after midnight (67% vs. 44.6%).
 - The 2021 YRBS continued a question on sexting that was first introduced in 2019. Overall 18.5% of teens reported sending, receiving, or sharing nude photos or sexual images in the past 30 days. This marked a statistical decrease from 2019 (24.9%).
 - Although the percentage of females reporting sexting was slightly higher than the percentage of males (20.3% for females and 16.8% for males), this difference was not statistically significant. There were no significant differences in rates of sexting across grade levels.
 - While sexting is fairly common, it also overlaps with a number of other risk categories and behaviors. For example, students who sexted in the past 30 days were 4.1 times more likely to have a history of unwanted sexual contact and 2.3 times more likely to have experienced online bullying.
- They were also 1.9 times more likely to report depression and 3 times more likely to consider suicide. It's important to note that most students who report sexting do not report any of these issues, and it's not clear whether sexting increases the likelihood of such risks, or just co-occurs among students already facing these risks. Regardless, if a student is found to be sexting, it may be helpful to ask follow-up questions about safety and well-being.

SCHOOL SAFETY

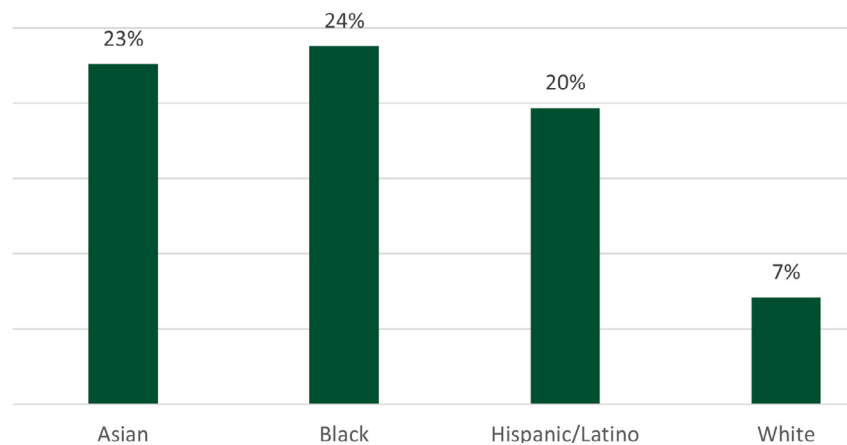
The vast majority of students continue to feel safe at school. In 2021, 80.4% of students felt safe at school “most of the time” or “always”. That figure remained steady from 2019.

- In 2021, 11.1% of students “rarely” or “never” felt safe at school. Trend analysis does not reveal any statistically significant increase or decrease in this rate, both over the last 10 years and since 2019.
- Students of color were statistically more likely than White students to say they do not feel safe at school. Among all racial groups, Black students were least likely to report feeling safe at school (see chart below).
- Hispanic students were most likely to skip school for safety concerns and were nearly twice as likely to do so than White students (12% vs. 6.3%).
- While there was no change from 2019 in the percent of students who had skipped school due to safety concerns (7.8%), the percentage has increased over the last 10 years (3.4% in 2011).
- Despite increasing from 2017-19, there was no significant change in the percentage of students who reported being in a physical fight on school property (8.4% overall) from 2019-21.

How Often Students Feel Safe at School



Rarely or Never Feel Safe at School By Race/Ethnicity



SCHOOL SAFETY (cont'd)



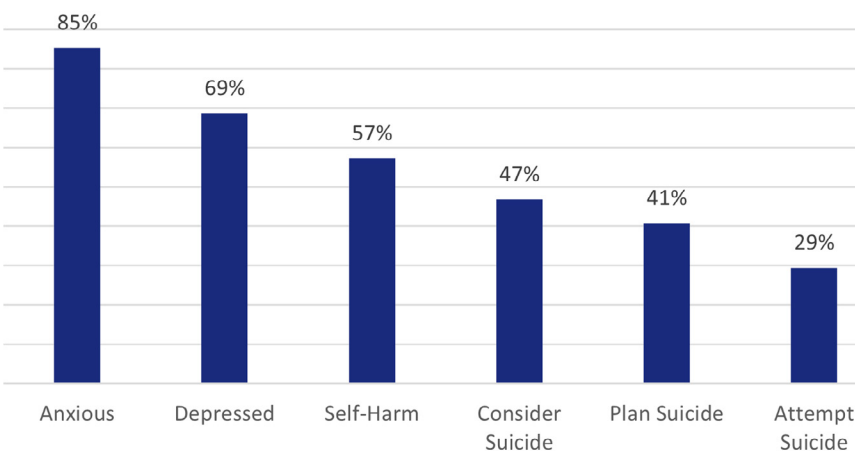
- The percentage of students who had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (5.5%) was statistically unchanged from 2019 and over the last 10 years.
- The 2021 YRBS contains a question about bringing a gun to school in the past 30 days. Overall, 1% of respondents reported that they had “carried a gun on school property” in the past 30 days. This figure is unchanged from the 2019 results.
- Approximately one in five students (20.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that violence was a problem at their school. Conversely, 45.8% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that violence was a problem at school.

SEXUAL AND DATING VIOLENCE

The YRBS includes some safety and victimization questions that are not restricted to the school environment. These include questions on whether a student has ever experienced rape, physical dating violence, sexual dating violence, or any unwanted sexual contact.

- Nearly one in eight students (12.6%) reported that at least once in the last year, someone had forced them “to do sexual things you did not want to do.” This is referred to as “sexual assault or coercion” in this report.
- Notable discrepancies in the prevalence of sexual assault exist for different subgroups. For example, females were 3.8 times more likely to experience sexual assault than males (20.2% vs. 5.3%), and LGBT students were 3.6 times more likely to report sexual assault than heterosexual students (29.2% vs. 8.1%).
- Most students who experienced sexual assault or coercion in their lifetimes (56%), indicated that it had happened more than once.
- Experiences of sexual assault or coercion were more common among certain groups, including students who are LGBT, students with physical disabilities or chronic health conditions (“health condition”), and students facing food insecurity.
- Students who had experienced sexual assault or coercion at least once in their lives were 3.6 times more likely to seriously consider suicide (47.9% vs. 13.2%) and 5.7 times more likely to have attempted suicide than students who had not experienced sexual assault (30% vs. 5.2%). Prevalence of mental health issues and suicidality among survivors of sexual assault or coercion appears in the chart below.
- 9.2% of students specifically indicated that they had been raped (i.e., forced to have sexual intercourse). However, females were more than five times as likely to report rape than males (15.3% of females

Mental Health Concerns (Past Year) Among Students Who Experienced Sexual Assault or Coercion





vs. 2.8% of males). The overall rate of reported rape is statistically unchanged from prior years.

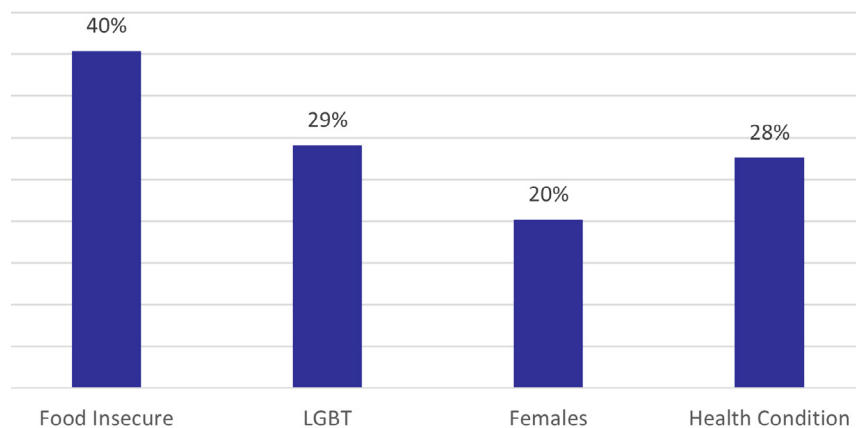
- Looking specifically at dating violence, 10.3% of students who had dated or gone out with someone during the past 12 months reported having been sexually assaulted by a

dating partner in the past year. 8.1% of dating students reported having been physically assaulted (e.g., hit, slammed into something, etc.) by a dating partner within the past year.

- Females were much more likely to report dating violence than males. Specifically, dating

females were more than five times as likely to report having been sexually assaulted by a dating partner in the past year (17.3% vs. 3.3%). Moreover, dating females were twice as likely to report having been physically assaulted by a dating partner within the past year (10.7% vs. 5.2%).

Experienced Sexual Assault or Coercion in the Past Year for Select Groups



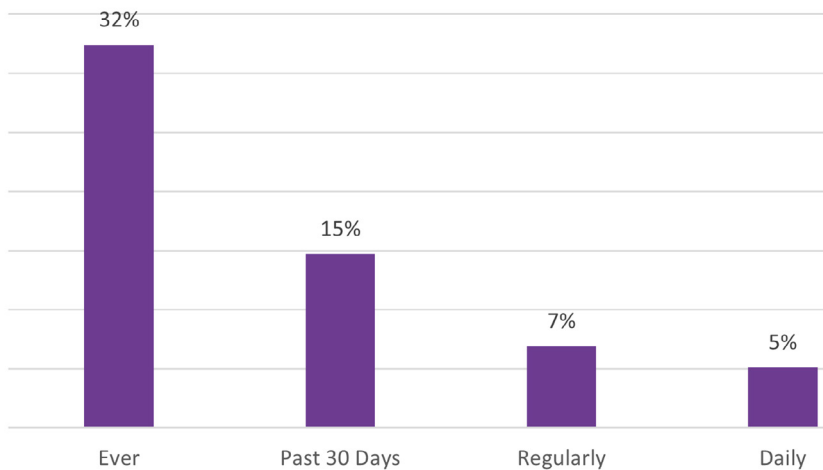
TOBACCO AND ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES

The use of electronic cigarettes or vaping devices remains concerningly high,* while the use of conventional cigarettes and other forms of tobacco have decreased.

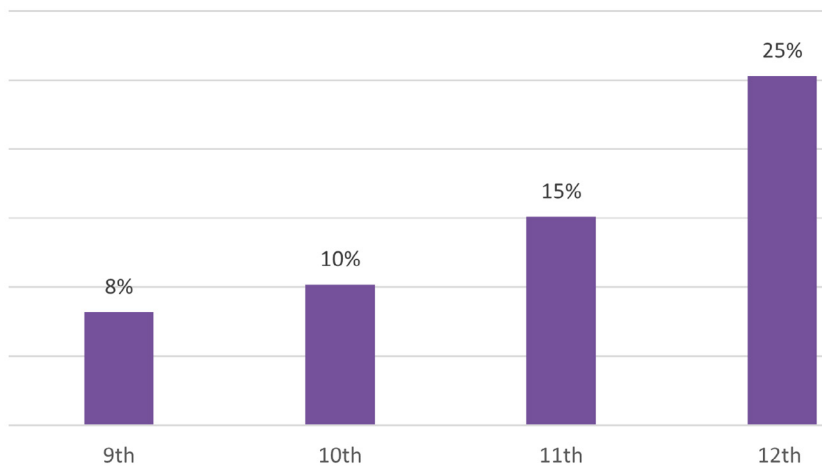
- One in three students (32.4%) have tried vaping, and one in six (14.7%) has vaped in the past 30 days. However, a closer look at the current vaping question shows that less than ten percent of students (6.9%) vape regularly (i.e., on at least
- 20 out of the last 30 days) and only 5.1% report vaping every day.
- When looking at current vaping rates (past 30 days), females (17.6%) and LGBT students (19.7%) reported a higher prevalence than males (12.3%) and heterosexual students (13.6%). One in four seniors currently vape (25.3%), a rate that is significantly higher than all other grade levels.
- Approximately one in four students (25.8%) who vape also smoke conventional (sometimes called “combustible”) cigarettes. Almost all students who smoke conventional cigarettes (85.9%), also vape.

**Prevalence of students who have ever tried vaping is down since 2019, but still concerningly high (32.4%). However, the prevalence of students who currently vape is unchanged from previous cycles.*

Vaping Frequency



Current Vaping by Grade Level



TOBACCO AND ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES (cont'd)

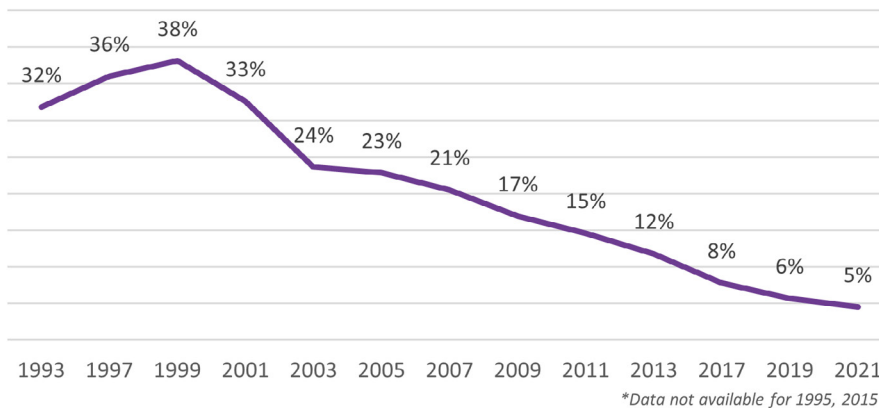
- Past 30 day use for conventional (“combustible”) cigarettes is 4.5% of students; past 30 day use for chew is 2.4%; past 30 day use for cigars or cigarillos is 2.4%.
- 6% of students have used any conventional tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos, chew) in the past 30 days.

15.2% of students have used any tobacco product, including conventional or vaping products.

- Along with high rates of vaping usage has come a sustained high prevalence of tobacco users who have tried to quit using any form of nicotine products in the last year. The

percentage of users who tried to quit all nicotine products increased from 37.6% in 2017 to 45% in 2019 and remained consistent in 2021 at 47.7%.

Percentage of Students Who Currently Smoke Cigarettes (Past 30 Days)*



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD

First added in 2019 and continued in 2021, the YRBS includes two questions aimed at understanding students' experiences of security and stability outside of school. These included questions on access to food, or food security, and housing mobility. Having access to food, a safe neighborhood, and stable housing are all important determinants of both health and academic performance. The 2021 YRBS also added a question on whether students had ever witnessed an attack in their neighborhood. Exposure to violence can have lasting, adverse effects on a student's mental wellbeing.

- The 2021 YRBS results show that few students experience constant hunger due to lack of food in the home (2.7%)

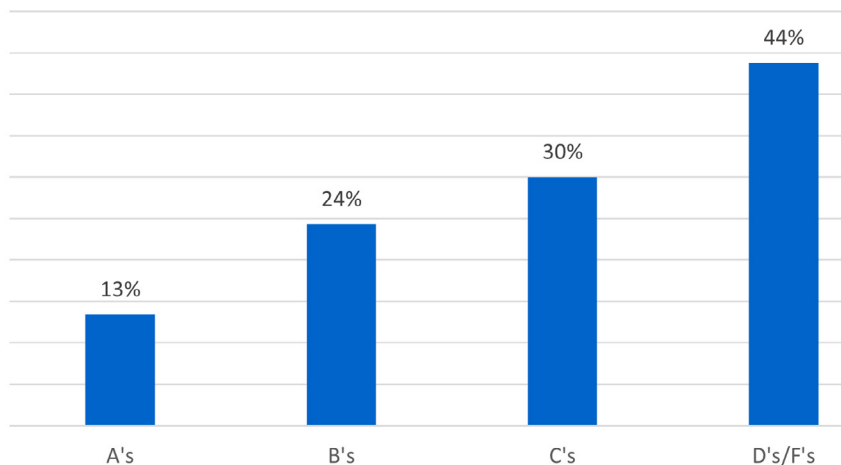
reported going hungry "most of the time" or "always"), but many experience episodic hunger. Nearly one in four students (22.5%) reported ever having experienced hunger during the past 30 days.

- Hispanic/Latinx students were most likely to experience hunger (defined as going hungry "most of the time" or "always") at a rate of 4.8%, which is statistically greater than White students. These figures are statistically unchanged from the 2019 data.
- In the 2021 YRBS, students with low grades are also more likely to report being hungry at least some of the time. Given this pattern, schools might consider whether students who

receive low grades are getting regular meals throughout the month.

- Overall, 18.2% of students reported witnessing someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood. That rate was higher for both Black (34%) and Hispanic/Latinx (33.4%) students. Each of these demographic groups were more than twice as likely to report witnessing an attack than White students (13%).
- Students who witnessed an attack in their neighborhood also reported statistically higher rates of anxiety (67.8%) than their peers who have that regular sense of neighborhood safety (48.1%)

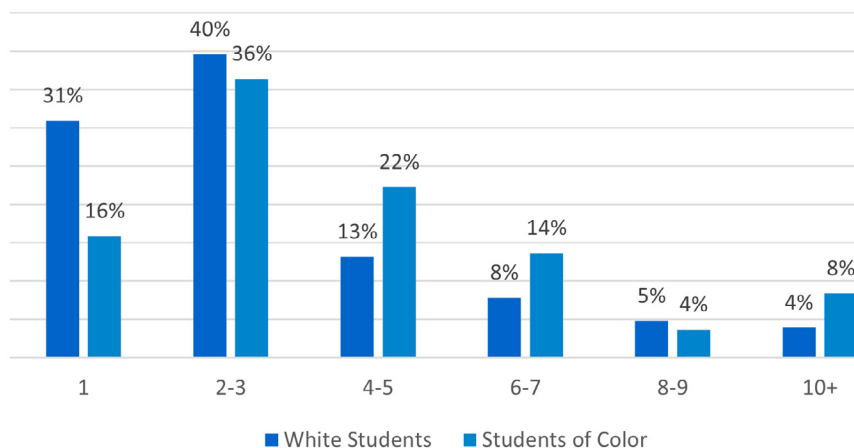
Food Insecurity (Hunger) by Self-Reported Grades





- Multiple moves can disrupt a student's education. When moves are the result of financial stress, family violence, or other stressful factors, it can impact a young person's health, education, and long-term opportunities.
 - Wisconsin students of color are much more likely than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts to have faced multiple moves. White students were twice as likely as students of color* to have lived in the same place (e.g., apartment, house, etc.) their entire lives. Conversely, students of color are also more than twice as likely (2.1) to have lived in ten or more places in their young lives.
- *Data does not allow for breakdown by all racial and ethnic groups*

Number of Places Lived (Residences)
White Students vs. Students of Color



SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

Sexual behaviors are statistically unchanged or decreased from 2019. Long-term trends do indicate that young people are less sexually active than in the past* and that those who are sexually active in high school start later and have fewer sexual partners than in the 1990s and early 2000s.

- 25.8% of students have ever had sex. This is a statistically significant decrease from 2019 (34.6%).
- One in five students (20.7%) is currently sexually active (i.e., sexual intercourse in the past three months). This is statistically unchanged from

2019 rates but marks a 10 year decline.

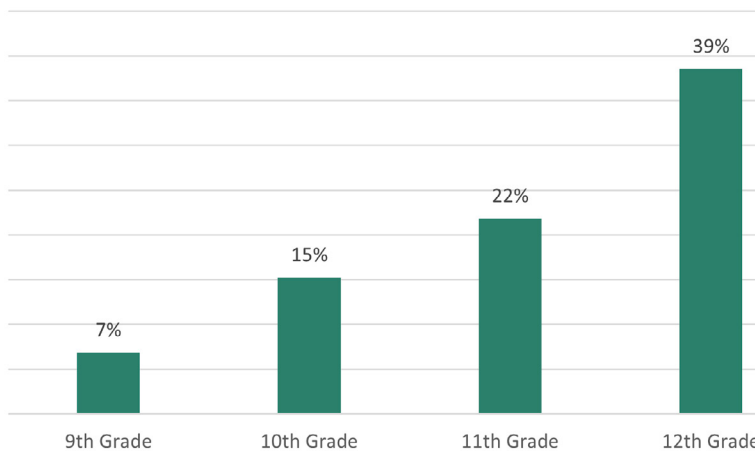
- While young people might believe that “everyone” is sexually active, in fact, the majority of high school students are not currently sexually active even by 12th grade (see chart below).
- 3.2% of students reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13. This represents less than one-eighth (12.6%) of all students who have ever had sexual intercourse.
- Relatively few students (5.9% of all students, meaning less than a fifth [19.7%] of sexually

active students) report having had four or more sexual partners. The chart below shows the number of lifetime sexual partners reported by sexually active students.

- Most sexually active students (57.7%) reported having used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse. 15.7% percent of sexually active students reported using a condom in addition to another method of birth control. This is statistically unchanged from 2017 (20.6%).

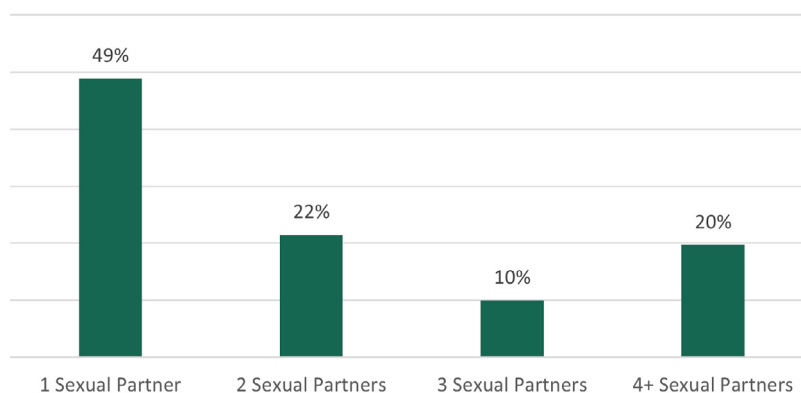
**E.g., lifetime sexual activity is down from 47% in 1993 and the low 40% range in the early 2000s.*

Currently Sexually Active by Grade Level



Number of Sexual Partners in Past Three Months

Sexually Active Students
(Students Reporting Zero Partners Excluded)



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Alcohol use remains high, although it continued its downward trend, while other drug use in Wisconsin was generally unchanged from 2019 rates. Long-term trends are towards lower use rates across substances; however, pockets of concern exist, especially around alcohol use, prescription drug use, and vaping.

- 49.3% of students have ever had a drink. This was a

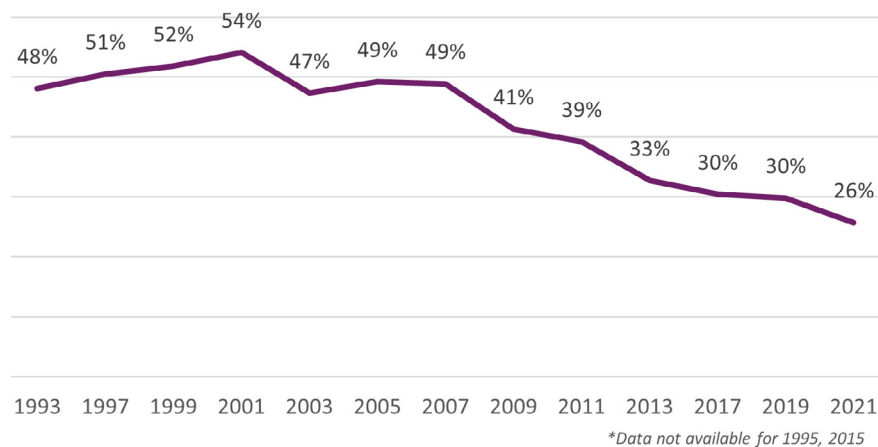
statistical decrease from 58.4% in 2019.

- While the rate of alcohol use has continued to decline since 2007, use in Wisconsin remains high with 1 in 4 students (25.7%) reporting at least one drink in the last 30 days. That figure is statistically unchanged from 2019 (29.8%), but it has declined in the last 10-years and is also the lowest

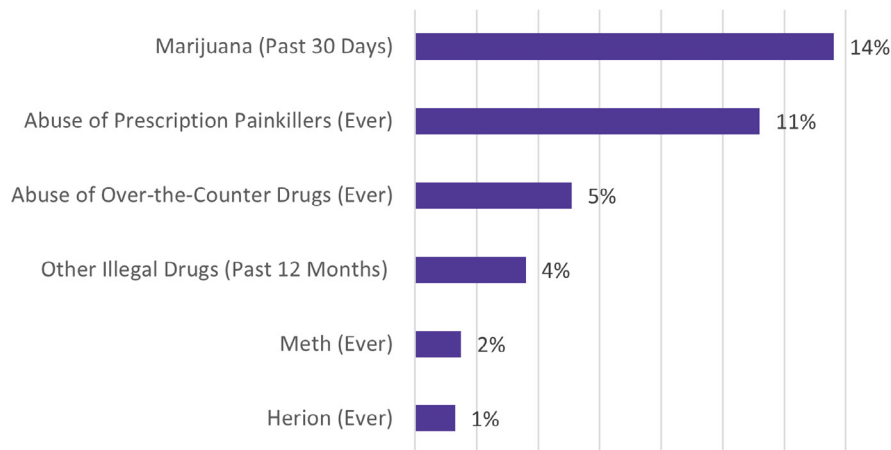
figure since Wisconsin first asked the question in 1993.

- Using the sex-specific definition of binge drinking (five drinks for males and four for females), in 2021, 9.2% of students binge drank in the past 30 days: 8.5% of males had five or more drinks; 9.9% of females had four or more drinks.

Percentage of Students Who Currently Drink Alcohol (Past 30 Days)*



Drug Use Rates





The YRBS asks questions about the misuse of two legal drugs: prescription painkillers and over-the-counter medications.

- Abuse of over-the-counter medications remained rare (5.1%), and this rate has decreased since the question was first asked in 2009 (11.6%).
- Prescription painkiller abuse hasn't gone up or down. However, given the dangers of synthetic opioids like fentanyl, that 11.2% of students still report misusing prescription painkillers is a concerning result.
- Prescription drug misuse was higher among females (14.1%) and Black students (19.4%).
- Current (past 30 day) marijuana use is 13.6% and lifetime marijuana use is 24.8%. Both current use and lifetime use has declined in the last 10 years. Moreover, current use has statistically decreased since 2019, while lifetime use remains statistically unchanged from 2017 levels.
- Less than 2% of students reported having ever used methamphetamines (1.5%) or heroin (1.3%). 3.6% of students reported having used any illegal drug besides marijuana within the past 12 months. All of these rates are statistically unchanged from the 2019 data.
- The percent of students who were offered or sold drugs at school during the past year (10.2%) was at its lowest recorded level. The percentage of students who attended school under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the past 12 months also hit a record low at 8.7%.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Wisconsin's 2021 YRBS data continue to show positive trends in traffic safety.

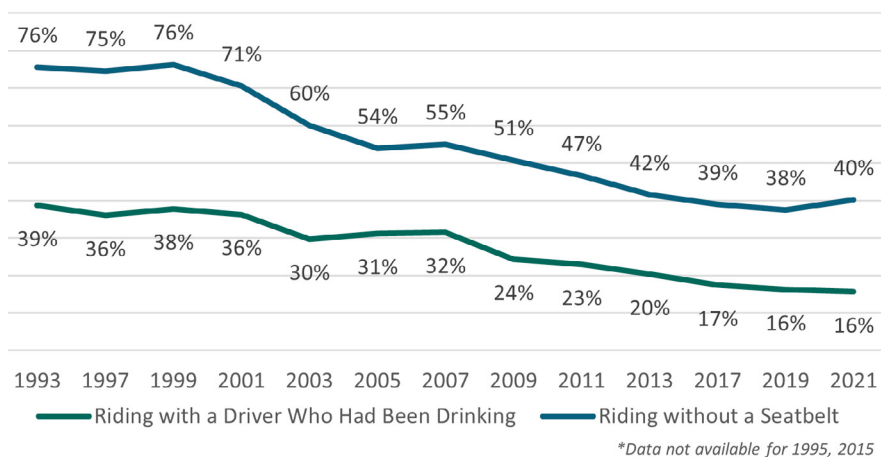
- All student groups report sustained improvement in seatbelt use, though racial and ethnic disparities remain. The percent of students overall who “rarely” or “never” used a seatbelt in a car is 6.3%. Looking at the racial and ethnic categories with sufficient data

to report, rates were 15.5% for Black students, 8.2% for Hispanic students, 8.3% for Multiple Race students, and 4.3% for White students. The differences between Black and White students are statistically significant.

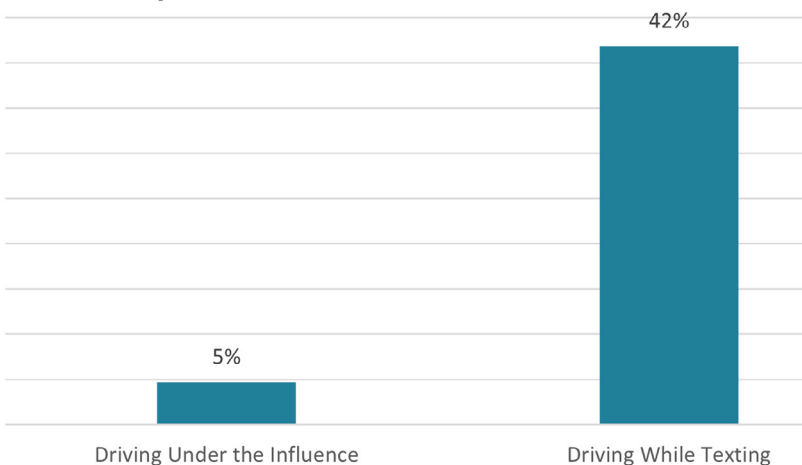
- 15.2% of students reported having ridden in a vehicle with a driver (of any age) who had been drinking.

- 4.7% of student drivers reported having driven under the influence of alcohol.
- 41.9% of student drivers reported texting while driving. While this is statistically unchanged from the 2019 rate (47.5%), it does mark a significant decline since 2013, when the question was first asked.

Trends in Passenger Risks*



Risky Driving Behaviors (Past 30 Days) Among Student Drivers Only



NUTRITION

Beginning in 2019 and continuing in 2021, the Wisconsin YRBS moved away from a series of several questions asking about the consumption of specific vegetables and beverages and towards a more consolidated list of general nutrition questions.

- In place of a long and changing list of nonalcoholic drinks that students use (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, milk, vitamin waters, etc.), the YRBS introduced a question on the consumption of plain water. Roughly three out of four students (77.4%) drink plain water at least once a day; 51.6% drink plain water three or more times per day. Rates of water consumption did not differ significantly by sex,

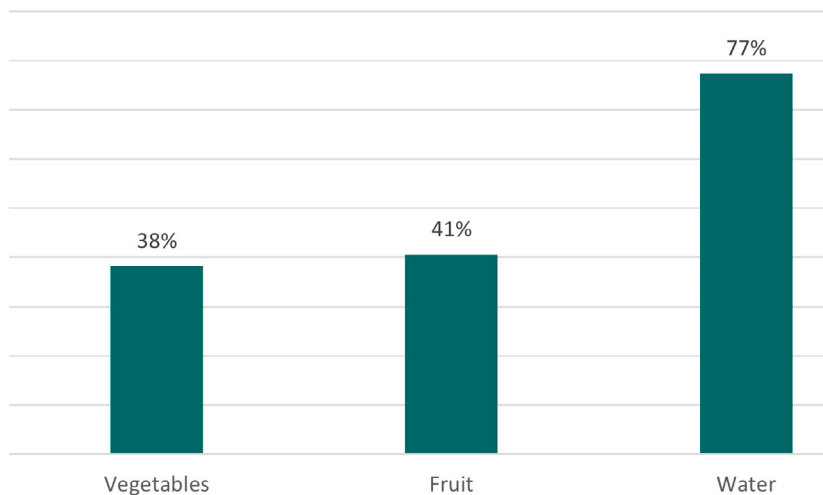
although Black students reported they were most likely to not drink any water during the 7 days before the survey.

- Less than one-third of students (27.1%) eat breakfast every day. Similarly, less than one in five students (19.1%) do not eat breakfast. Compared to 2019, the percentage of students eating breakfast every day has decreased, while the percentage of students never eating breakfast has increased. This follows a broader ten-year trend of more students reporting that they do not eat breakfast (e.g., up from 10.4% in 2011).
- Students who use screens late at night, as well as those who

report getting little sleep in general, are less likely to eat breakfast. For instance, 35.6% of students who did not use screens after midnight at breakfast every day, compared to 19.7% of students who did use screens between midnight and 5 am. While it's not clear that the late nights cause students to miss breakfast* arriving to school both sleep-deprived and without breakfast puts those students at a significant disadvantage.

**The same conditions within the home could lead students to both lack sleep and miss breakfast.*

Daily Consumption of Healthy Food and Water



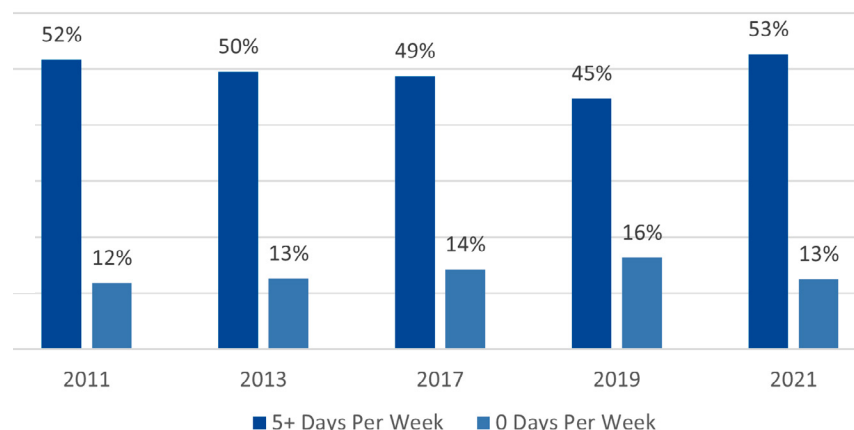
PHYSICAL HEALTH

The 2021 YRBS showed some sustained improvements in nutrition and reductions in alcohol and drug use (please see page 26 for the section on alcohol and drug use as well as page 29 for the section on nutrition). Of note, students reported increases in physical activity for the first time since the question was first asked in 2011. At the same time, students continued to report less sleep and worse self-reported overall health.

- Rates of physical activity have significantly improved after declining for several years. In 2021, 52.6% of students reported engaging in at least 60 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week. That is up from 44.7% in 2019 and consistent with rates from 2011 when the question was first asked.
- Conversely, the percentage of students who report no sustained physical activity in the past seven days (“0 days/week”) has decreased from 16.3% in 2019 to 12.5% in 2021.
- There is a gender gap in physical activity, with 59.9% of males and 44.7% of females reporting 60 or more minutes of physical activity five or more days per week. This gender gap was also present in the 2019 results.
- 12.2% of students reported having one or more sports-induced concussions during the past 12 months.
- The percent of students whose body mass index qualifies them as obese* continues to increase over the long-term (9.9% in 1999 to 13.5% in 2021), although it is statistically unchanged from 2019 (14.5% in 2019 vs. 13.5% in 2021).
- Students who qualify as obese were significantly less likely (1.69 times) than those students not qualifying as obese to rate their health as “excellent” or “very good” (30.4% vs. 51.4%). They were also statistically more likely to report depression (39.9% vs. 31.4%). However, they were not significantly less likely to feel like they belonged at school.
- After falling from 2017 to 2019, the percent of students who described their general health as “excellent” or “very good” remained statistically unchanged in 2021 (47.2%). However, this percentage has decreased over the last 10 years.

**As calculated through self-reported weight and height. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index at or above the 95th percentile for age and sex.*

Trends in Physical Activity*

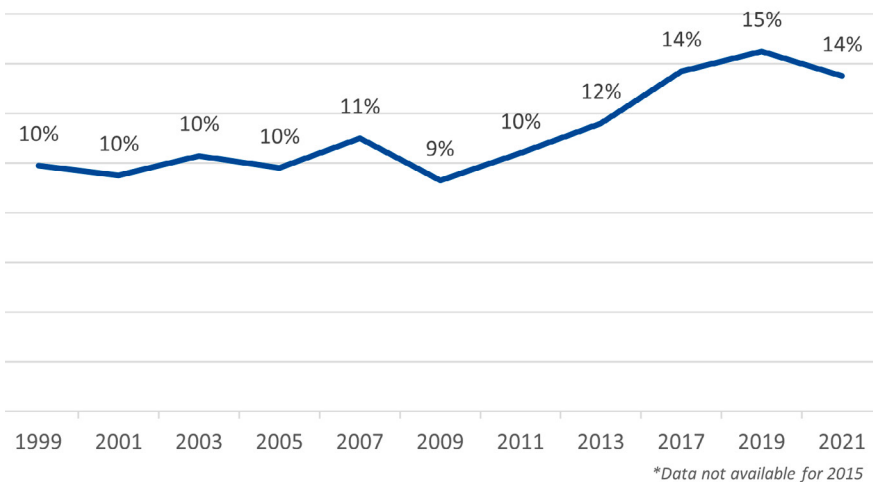


**Data not available for 2015*

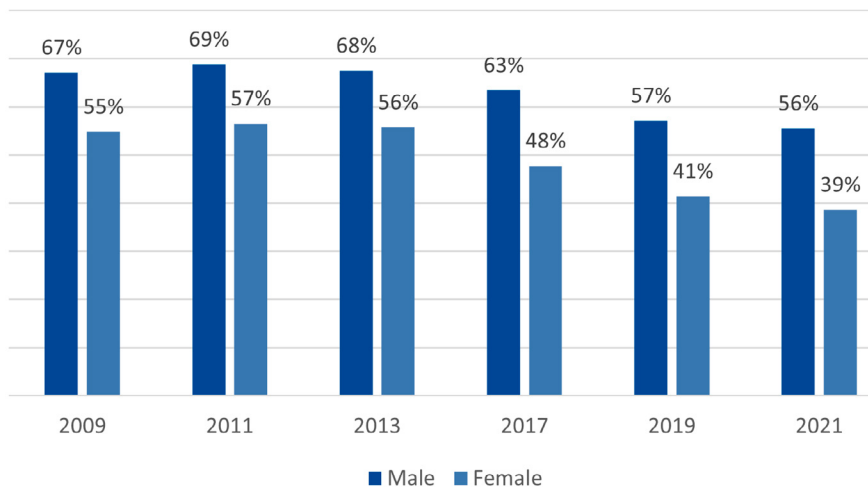
PHYSICAL HEALTH (cont'd)

- Male students were 44% more likely than females to describe their health as “excellent” or “very good”. The chart below shows the decline in self-reported health for both males and females over time. In 2021, both genders reported the lowest recorded rates of excellent or very good health.
- The percent of students who regularly get eight or more hours of sleep remained steady at 28%. It continues to be below 2013 data (35%).
- When asked how much sleep they get on an average school night, the most common response was seven hours. Nearly one in five students reported five or fewer hours of sleep per night (19.7%); 23.3% reported six hours; 29.1% reported seven hours; and 28% reported eight or more hours.
- Compared to students who get eight or more hours of sleep, students who get five or fewer hours of sleep are more than twice (2.24 times) as likely to report depression (50.3% vs. 22.5%) and 1.6 times more likely to report anxiety (65% vs. 40.6%).
- 11.2% of students report a chronic health condition or physical disability.
- 74.6% of students report having seen a dentist within the past 12 months
- Roughly one-fifth of students (20.5%) “most of the time” or “always” use sunscreen when outside for an hour or more on a sunny day.

Percentage of Students Reporting Obesity*



Excellent or Very Good Health By Sex



NEWLY ADDED QUESTIONS IN 2021

Employment

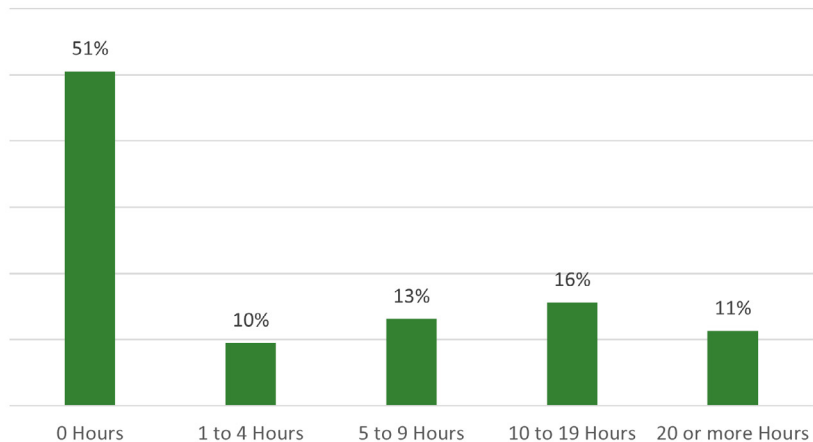
For the first time in 2021, the YRBS included a question on employment status, specifically asking students to report the number of hours they work at a paying job outside the home during a typical school week. Students who are stressed by having to work several hours per week might also report several other risk factors, such as adverse mental health concerns and fewer supports at school and at home. Understanding students' realities outside of the classroom is crucial for addressing their

challenges at school and providing corresponding support.

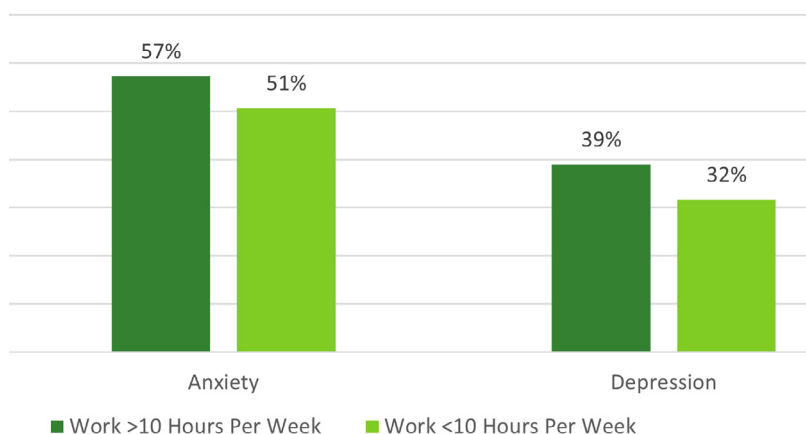
- Unsurprisingly, older students tended to be more likely to work at least one hour at a paying job (71.5% for 12th graders vs. 25.7% for 9th graders). There were no statistical differences between males or females or racial groups.
- When students have to work many hours per week in addition to managing schoolwork, it can take a toll on their overall mental health and well-being. Analysis of the

employment question found that mental health concerns are greater among students who work at least 10 hours/week vs. those working less than 10 hours/week (see chart below). However, there were no significant differences in mental health problems between those working at least one hour per week and those who do not work at all. This suggests that when students are working many hours at a job each week in addition to managing schoolwork, they may have greater mental health concerns.

Students Who Work Various Hours Per Week



Self-Reported Mental Health Concerns By Number of Hours Worked Per Week



Neglect and Family Mental Health

The 2021 YRBS included a new question regarding the presence of an adult to provide basic needs. Specifically, the question asked students, "During your life, how often has there been an adult in your household who tried hard to make sure your basic needs were met, such as looking after your safety and making sure you had clean clothes and enough to eat." Facing neglect and having to serve one's own basic needs instead of having an adult's support can have an adverse effect on student outcomes (CDC, 2019). The 2021 YRBS also asked students whether they had ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. Research has demonstrated that exposure to childhood adversity has an impact on adult mental health, increasing the risk for depression and suicide.

- 10.9% of all students reported that they "never" or "rarely" had an adult in their household to provide for their basic needs. Hispanic/Latinx students were least likely to have an adult present to support their needs. More specifically, only 83% of Hispanic/Latinx students had a supportive adult compared to 90.7% of white students who had a supportive adult.
- 40.5% of all students reported ever having lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. This rate was highest for females (49.1% of females vs. 31.9% of males) and Hispanic/Latinx students (49.4%).

COVID-19

In light of the unique situation posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2021 YRBS asked two questions related to this topic. The first question asked students whether a parent or other adult in their home lost their job during the COVID-19 pandemic, even for a short amount of time. The second question asked students to report the number of people who they know that died or got very sick from COVID-19. ("Very sick" was defined as "having to spend one or more nights at the hospital"). Having to cope with a parent losing a job or knowing family and friends who suffered medical complications or even death from COVID-19 can significantly impair a student's ability to learn.

- Overall, 23.9% of students reported that a parent lost their job during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hispanic/Latinx students were most likely to report that a parent lost their job during the pandemic (31.9%). There were no additional statistical differences between genders or racial groups.
- 54.1% of all students reported that they know at least one person who died or got very sick from COVID-19. Females (57.7%), Asian students (67.3%), and Hispanic/Latinx students (62.5%) were all significantly more likely to report knowing someone who got very sick or died from COVID-19.

WISCONSIN TRENDS SUMMARY (1993-2021)

Below is a summary of key trends, as compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Only questions with statistically significant changes are provided here. If the trend is consistently significant across several time frames, all time frames are noted. If there were conflicting trends over time (e.g., first a decrease and then an increase), only the most recent trend is noted.

Positive Health Trends

ALCOHOL

- (-) Ever Drank* ^(c)
- (-) First Drink before age 13 ^{(a) (d)}
- (-) Current Alcohol Use ^{(a) (b) (d)}

TOBACCO AND ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES

- (-) Ever tried smoking cigarettes ^{(b) (d)}
- (-) Ever tried electronic vapor products ^(c)
- (-) Currently smoke ^{(a) (b)}
- (-) Currently smoke cigars ^{(b) (c) (d)}
- (-) Currently chew ^(d)
- (-) Any type of tobacco or electronic vapor product use ^(d)

OTHER DRUGS

- (-) Ever tried marijuana ^{(a) (b)}
- (-) Tried marijuana before age 13 ^{(a) (b)}
- (-) Current marijuana use ^{(a) (b) (c)}
- (-) Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property ^{(a) (b) (c)}
- (-) Ever abused over-the-counter drugs ^{(b) (d)}
- (-) Attended school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs ^{(c) (d)}

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- (-) Rode in a car with a driver who had been drinking alcohol ^{(a) (b)}
- (-) Drove a car under the influence of alcohol ^(d)
- (-) Texting and driving ^(d)
- (+) Seatbelt use ^{(a) (b)}

SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

- (-) Ever had sex ^(c)
- (-) First sexual intercourse before age 13 ^(a)
- (-) Currently sexually active ^{(a) (b)}
- (-) Multiple sexual partners ^(b)
- (-) Received, sent, or shared nude photos ^(c)

BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

- (-) Bullied on school property ^{(b) (c)}
- (-) Involved in physical fight on school property ^(a)
- (-) Threatened with a weapon on school property ^{(a) (c)}

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- (-) Did not exercise at least 60 minutes on any day of the week ^(c)
- (+) Exercised at least 60 minutes 5 days/week and 7 days/week ^(c)
- (+) Use sunscreen ^(d)

Key:

- (-) = numbers are decreasing
- (+) = numbers are increasing
- a = 1993-2021 time frame for the trend
- b = 2009-2021 time frame for the trend
- c = 2017-2021 time frame for the trend
- d = other data ranges that are available on the DPI website

*Trend analysis only available for 2019-2021. However, 2021 lifetime alcohol use is the lowest rate on record.

Negative Health Trends

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE

- (+) Report depression ^{(b) (c)}
- (+) Report anxiety ^(d)
- (+) Consider suicide ^(b)
- (+) Made a suicide plan ^(b)
- (+) Self-harm ^(b)

ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES

- (+) Currently use electronic vapor products ^(d)
- (+) Use electronic vapor products frequently [both on at least 20 days per month and on all 30 days] ^(d)

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- (-) Sense of school belonging ^(d)
- (-) Have at least one supportive teacher or school staff member ^{(b) (d)}
- (-) Most of the time or always get the help they need when dealing with mental health problem ^(d)

SCHOOL SAFETY

- (+) Miss school for safety concerns ^{(a) (b)}

OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

- (+) Obesity ^{(b) (d)}
- (-) Sleep ^(d)
- (-) Eat breakfast daily ^{(b) (c)}
- (-) Drink at least 1 glass of water per day ^(c)
- (-) Say health is excellent or very good ^{(b) (d)}

Key:

(-) = numbers are decreasing

(+) = numbers are increasing

a = 1993-2021 timeframe for the trend

b = 2009-2021 timeframe for the trend

c = 2017-2021 timeframe for the trend

d = other date ranges that are available on the DPI website

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