

**Masconomet Middle School  
2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey  
Results**

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Tri-Town Council**

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## **Sample and Methodology**

### **Survey**

The 2018 Masconomet Youth Survey was based on MA YRBS by the CDC; MOST OF US Teen Norms Survey; National Social Norms Resource Center – Assessment of Norms, Behaviors, and Attitudes; Survey of Student Norms – Hobart and William Smith Colleges – Alcohol Education Project. Questions in the survey measured youth demographics, substance use, protective factors, depression, personal safety, and sexual health. Social norms questions were added to assess misperceptions among Masconomet Middle School youth on areas of substance use. Survey questions were reviewed and developed using the lens of Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets Model.

### **Sample**

The survey was administered on November 19, 2018. The final number and demographic profile of youth surveyed are discussed in below.

### **Data cleaning and validity**

Several steps were taken to ensure that the gathered data accurately reflects the behaviors of Masconomet Middle School youth, a process known as “data cleaning.” The completeness and logical consistency criteria used by the CDC were applied to the surveys. If a youth answered fewer than 20 questions, his/her survey was dropped (completeness). If a youth’s responses were “inconsistent” (e.g. they indicated they were 15 years old but said they had their first drink at age 17, or they responded in one question that they never have been sexually active and in a following question that they have had 3 sexual partners) responses to both questions (except for age) were set to missing.

Following the data cleaning procedure, the final number of completed surveys for the Masconomet Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2018 is 493 youth. Youth might have chosen not to answer certain questions so that the total number of responses to questions varies.

### **Comparison Data**

Since the survey administered at Masconomet Middle School was based on an existing instrument, comparison data for many question items is publicly available. Comparisons are useful for providing context to survey results and can aid in identifying both strengths and priority areas.

Where available, comparison data is provided in this report. National comparison numbers are from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data set issued by the Centers for Disease Control. State comparison numbers used are from the 2017 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data set reported by The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Public Health. This is the most current comparison data available.

## Sample

### Masconomet Middle School Survey Population

Total number of youth enrolled	648
Number of youth absent on day of survey	67
Opt-outs	56
Surveys removed or unaccounted for (e.g. youth did not complete)	32
Final sample included in analysis for this report	493
Representation rate (% of youth included in analysis out of total available to take the survey)	93.9%
Participation rate (% of youth who took the survey out of total youth enrolled)	76%

### Demographic Profile

	Number	Percentage
<b>Total Valid Surveys</b>	493	100%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	247	50.1%
Male	240	48.7%
Non-binary	2	.4%
Missing total	4	.8%
<b>Grade</b>		
7th grade	245	49.7%
8th grade	248	50.3%
Missing total	0	
<b>Age</b>	Number	Percentage
11 years old or younger	1	.2%
12 years old	178	36.1%
13 years old	235	47.7%
14 years old	79	16.0%
15 years old	0	
Missing total	0	

**Race/Ethnicity** (youths were allowed to select more than one response)

White	412	84.8%
Black or African American	12	2.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	17	3.5%
Southeast Asian American	6	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino	25	5.1%
Asian American	28	5.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	1.0%
Other	75	15.4%

## Executive Summary

### Overall

- The proportion of youth who engage in risky behaviors is relatively small with fewer differences across age, gender, and grade than in 2016. Also, there were fewer differences across time (2018 vs 2016) and most of those were in the positive direction.
- The findings that were most noticeable revolved around electronic vapor products (little use, great perceived harm and parental disapproval, severe overestimate of others' use, and topic most frequently discussed with parents).
- The other factor that merits attention is the number of youth completing the survey. There were 493 completed surveys after removing 6 blank surveys. This decrease could be related to decreased enrollment, or to an increase in the number of youth opting out. If those opting out are systematically different from those who complete the survey, then results may not be truly reflective of the middle school population.

### Substance Use

- Relatively small numbers of youth reported either lifetime or current use of the substances examined with lifetime use percentages ranging from 0% to 7.7% and current use percentages, from 0% to 2.9%
- There was a slight, but non-significant, uptick in lifetime use of alcohol.
- Unlike 2016, there were very few demographic differences in use of substances. This pattern is similar to the pattern in 2014.
- The vast majority of youth thought that substance use posed moderate or great risk of harm (over 75% for all substances) and youth thought that both parents and peers would feel substance use was wrong or very wrong (above 90% for parents and above 85% for friends).
- In 2018 the proportion of youth who said there was great risk in using electronic vapor products was greater than in 2016.
- There was no change in perceived disapproval by parents or friends for use of any of the substances from 2016 to 2018.
- Unlike 2016, there were limited differences across demographic groups in terms of perceived harm of using the five substances. The most interesting difference was that 8<sup>th</sup> graders were **more likely** than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to perceive great risk of harm from using electronic vapor products. The opposite pattern is usually what we find.
- Youth in 2018 were more likely than those in 2016 to say that their parents would think use of electronic vapor products was very wrong.
- Most youth over-estimated their peers use of substances when compared with actual use for all substances with electronic vapor products having the greatest difference (perceived minus actual) of 61 points – 20 points higher than the next highest difference. Older youth were more likely than younger youth to overestimate. This finding probably merits further

examination.

### **Sexual Identity and Sexual Behavior**

- About 8 in 10 youth described themselves as heterosexual; 1 in 10, gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, and 1 in 10 were uncertain. Two youth described themselves as transgender, gender non-conforming.
- About 1 in 50 youth reported being sexually active – about 1/3 with multiple partners. Nearly three quarters of those who are sexually active used a condom the last time they were active. Please note that because the number of youth who reported being sexually active is very small (6) results about multiple partners and condom use are not terribly useful.

### **Behaviors that Contribute to Unintentional Injuries**

- Few youth reported riding with drivers who have been drinking (4.9%) or smoking marijuana (1.0%).
- Fewer youth in 2018 compared with 2016 reported infrequent use of helmets while rollerblading, biking, etc.

### **Behaviors that Contribute to Violence**

- About 1 in 7 said they carried a weapon at some point and about 1 in 3 said they have gotten into a fight at some point.
- Boys were more likely than girls to report both behaviors.
- There were no differences across time on these questions.

### **Bullying**

- About 20% of the youth reported having been bullied and about 2% reported having bullied others.
- About 14% reported being cyber-bullied and 3% reported being a cyber-bully.
- Most bullying was verbal rather than physical.
- More youth reported frequent teacher intervention in episodes of bullying than in 2016.
- About a quarter of youth reported that people had posted things on social media that upset them. About 1 in 12 reported receiving explicit material via electronic communication and fewer than 1 in 50 reported sending this type of material.

### **Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm**

- Almost 10% reported stress was a problem always and almost 1 in 4 reported it was a problem often – not different from 2016.
- Girls were more likely than boys to report stress as a problem always and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to



respond often or always.

- School work and self-expectations were the most common sources of stress.
- Most youth used positive stress management techniques although about 1 in 7 said they had no way to manage stress. The proportion of youth who reported using positive techniques was significantly higher in 2018 than in 2016.
- About 1 in 6 reported being clinically depressed at some point – not significantly different from 2016.
- About 6% said they seriously considered suicide and 1.2% actually attempted.

### **Protective Factors**

- Most youth had an adult to confide in and at least ½ appeared to feel valued based on their responses to several questions. The most frequently discussed topic was electronic vapor products – about 42%.
- Nearly ¾ of the youth said they felt safe at school.
- Positive responses to questions about peers and adults in the community caring about the youth increased significantly between 2016 and 2018.
- Most youth engaged in sports or extra-curricular activities or community service.

### **Weight, Weight Management, Exercise and Nutrition**

- About equal numbers of youth saw themselves as underweight or overweight (around 20%). There was no difference across time.
- Close to 1/3 of the youth reported trying to lose weight – and most used exercise or calorie reduction as their weight loss methods.
- Nearly all youth reported being physically active at least 20 minutes at least one day in the past 7.
- Virtually all youth reported using electronic media for things other than school work every day with nearly half reporting use for three or more hours a day.
- About ½ reported eating breakfast every day.
- Less than 10% said they drank a caffeinated beverage at least once a day and about 14% reporting having an energy drink at least once in the past 30 days.
- More than half of the youth reported getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night.

## Substance Use

### Comparison to 2016 and Massachusetts Data

Charts 1 and 2 on the following pages demonstrate lifetime and current (past 30 day) use of various substances for MASCO in 2018, 2016, 2014, 2012, 2010 and Massachusetts in 2017.

Between 2016 and 2018 there were no significant differences in either lifetime or 30 day use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, or inhalants. However, there was a significant decline from 2010 (5.4%) and 2012 (5.1%) to 2018 (0%) in lifetime use of cigarettes, marijuana (.6% vs 2.3% and 5%) and prescription drugs (.8% (2018) vs 4.1% (2012)). Interestingly, even though youth in 2018 were less likely than those in 2010 and 2012 to show lifetime use of cigarettes, they were more likely than those in 2010 to say they had used some type of tobacco product in the last 30 days (2.9% vs 1.2%).

### Tobacco/Nicotine

In the 2018 survey, no youth reported ever having tried smoking a cigarette. Slightly more than 1 in 50 reported using electronic smoking devices in the past 30 days (2.4%) There were no differences across sub-groups (e.g. age, gender, or grade). In terms of other tobacco products, about 1 in 100 (1.4%) had tried some other product and all of those tried some other product not listed. The most common ways to obtain tobacco products was to borrow them from someone (64% of those who use a tobacco product). Boys were more likely than girls to report having used some type of tobacco product (3.8% vs 2.0%).

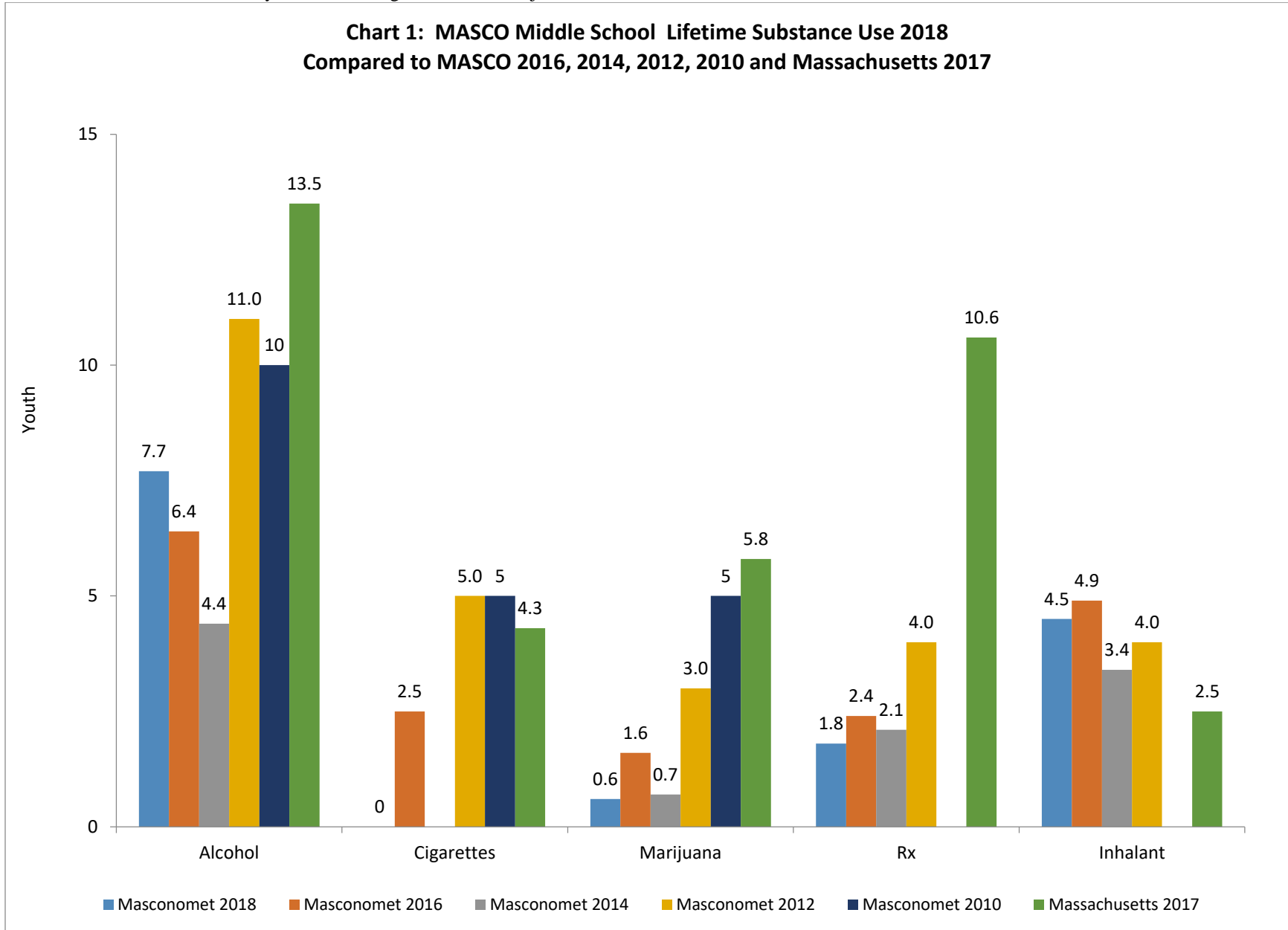
### Alcohol

About 1 in 15 youth reported lifetime use of alcohol with 11.4 years as the age of onset – slightly lower than 2016. About 1 in 50 reported current use of alcohol (2.9%) and about 1 in 15 of those who drank reported at least one incident of high risk drinking in the past 30 days (.2%). About 4 in 10 reported that alcohol would be fairly or very easy to obtain (36.9%) – a significant decline from 2010 (46.6%). Fourteen year olds were more likely than 12 year olds (21.5% vs 9.1%) to respond “very easy” while 12 year olds were more likely than 14 year olds (18.3% vs 3.8%) to respond "impossible". About 8 in 10 of those who drank reported obtaining alcohol at home – and about 60% indicated they drank at home and 30% at family events.

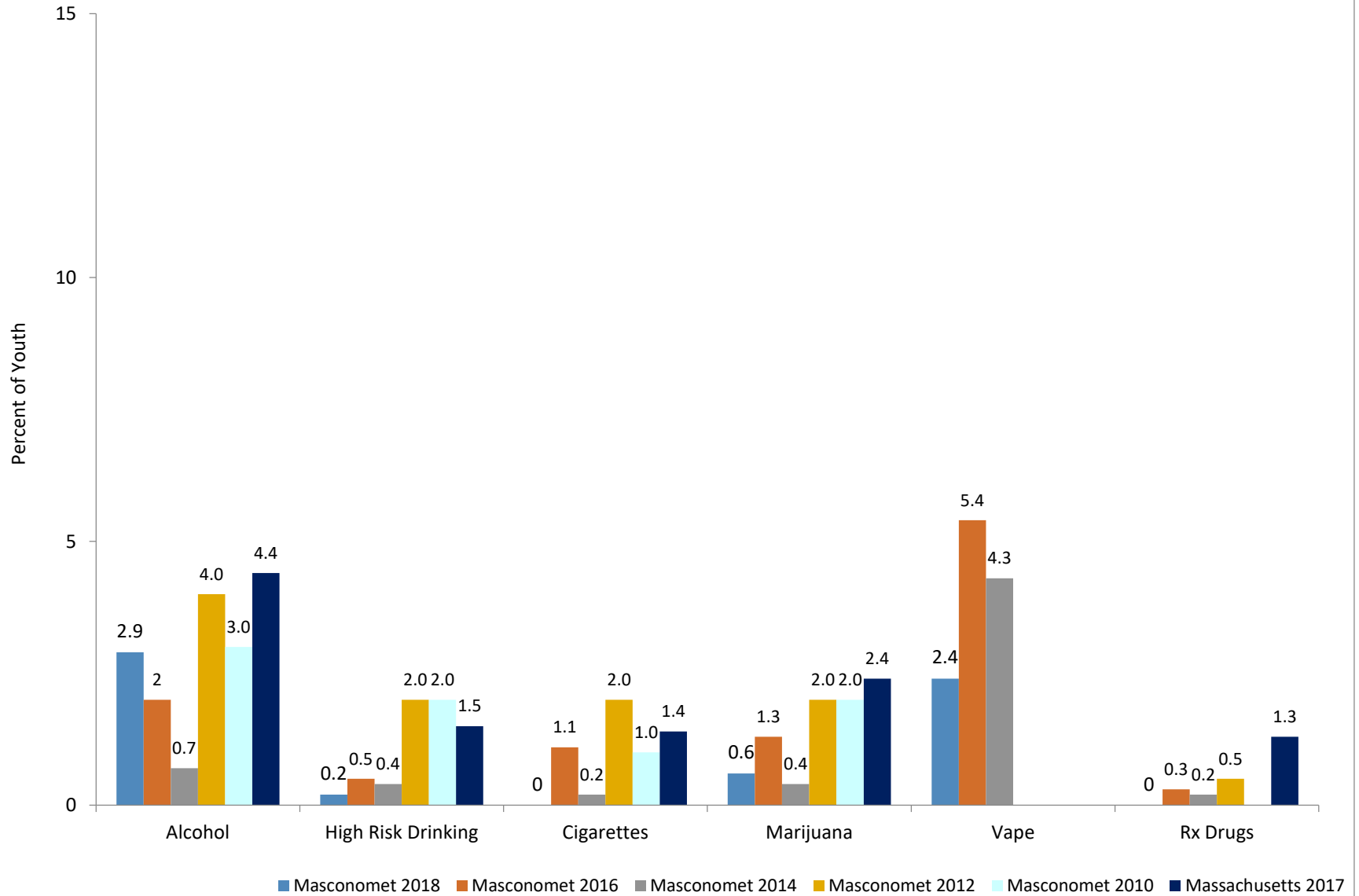
### Other substances

In terms of lifetime use, inhalants were the most popular other substance with 4.5% reporting have used inhalants at least once, followed by prescription drugs without a prescription (1.8%), over the counter medications (1.0%), and marijuana (.6%). There were a very limited number of current users of either marijuana (.6%) or prescription drugs without a prescription (0%). Age of onset for marijuana was 13.0 yrs. About 1 in 25 said it would be fairly or very easy to obtain marijuana (4.1%) while close to 50% said it would be impossible. Girls were more likely than boys (55.3% vs 44.1%) and 7<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders (56.6% vs 42.7%) to say it would be impossible. Fourteen year olds were more likely than their younger counterparts to say it would be fairly easy (10.1% vs 1.1% and 2.2%).

**Chart 1: MASCO Middle School Lifetime Substance Use 2018  
Compared to MASCO 2016, 2014, 2012, 2010 and Massachusetts 2017**



**Chart 2: MASCO Middle School Past 30 Days Substance Use 2018  
Compared to MASCO 2016, 2014, 2012, 2010 and Massachusetts (2017)**



## **Perception of Risk of Harm, Parental and Peer Disapproval**

Chart 3 shows that in 2018 the vast majority of middle school youth perceived that substance use entailed great or moderate risk of harm with all five substances above 75% and cigarettes and misuse of prescription drugs over 90%. Perceptions of great risk for use of electronic vapor products were significantly higher in 2018 than in 2016 (47.6% vs 37.9%). There were no other significant differences between 2018 and 2016 on perception of great risk.

Chart 3 reveals that nearly all youth think their parents and peers think use of the substances is wrong or very wrong (with parents over 90% for all substances and friends over 85%). From 2016 to 2018 perceptions of great or moderate risk of harm for using marijuana (79.3% vs 87.5%) and electronic vapor products (75.3% vs 87.8%) increased while it decreased for use of alcohol (87.4% vs 76.6%). There were no differences across time for estimates of how wrong their parents or friends would find the use of any of the substances.

Unlike in the past two cycles, in 2018 there were a limited number of differences across age, grade, and gender in terms of perceived harm of use of five substances. The most notable difference was the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were **more likely** than 7<sup>th</sup> graders (80.1% vs 65.0%) to perceive great risk from use of prescription drugs. This is the opposite of the typical pattern of younger youth perceiving more harm than older youth. From 2016 to 2018 there was a significant increase in the proportion of youth saying they perceived great harm in using electronic vapor products (37.9% to 47.6%).

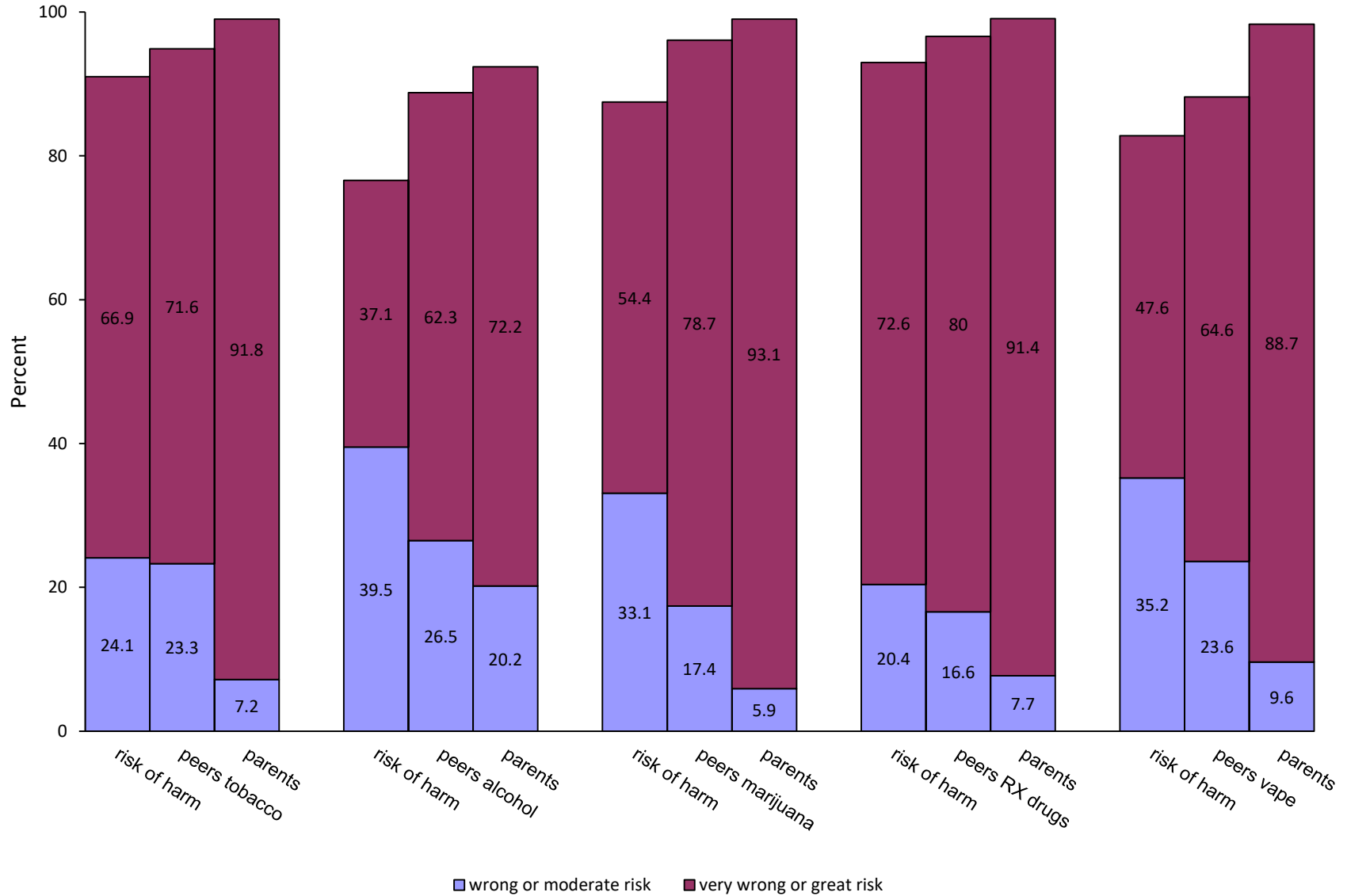
In terms of perceived parental disapproval, younger youth were more likely than older youth to say their parents would see use of electronic vapor products and drinking alcohol as very wrong. When asked about friends' disapproval, girls were more likely than boys to say their friends would think it very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or smoke marijuana. Youth in 2018 were more likely than youth in 2016 to report that their parents would think using electronic vapor products was very wrong. In contrast, youth in 2018 were less likely than those in **2014** to report that their parents and friends would think drinking alcohol was very wrong.

## **Social Norming**

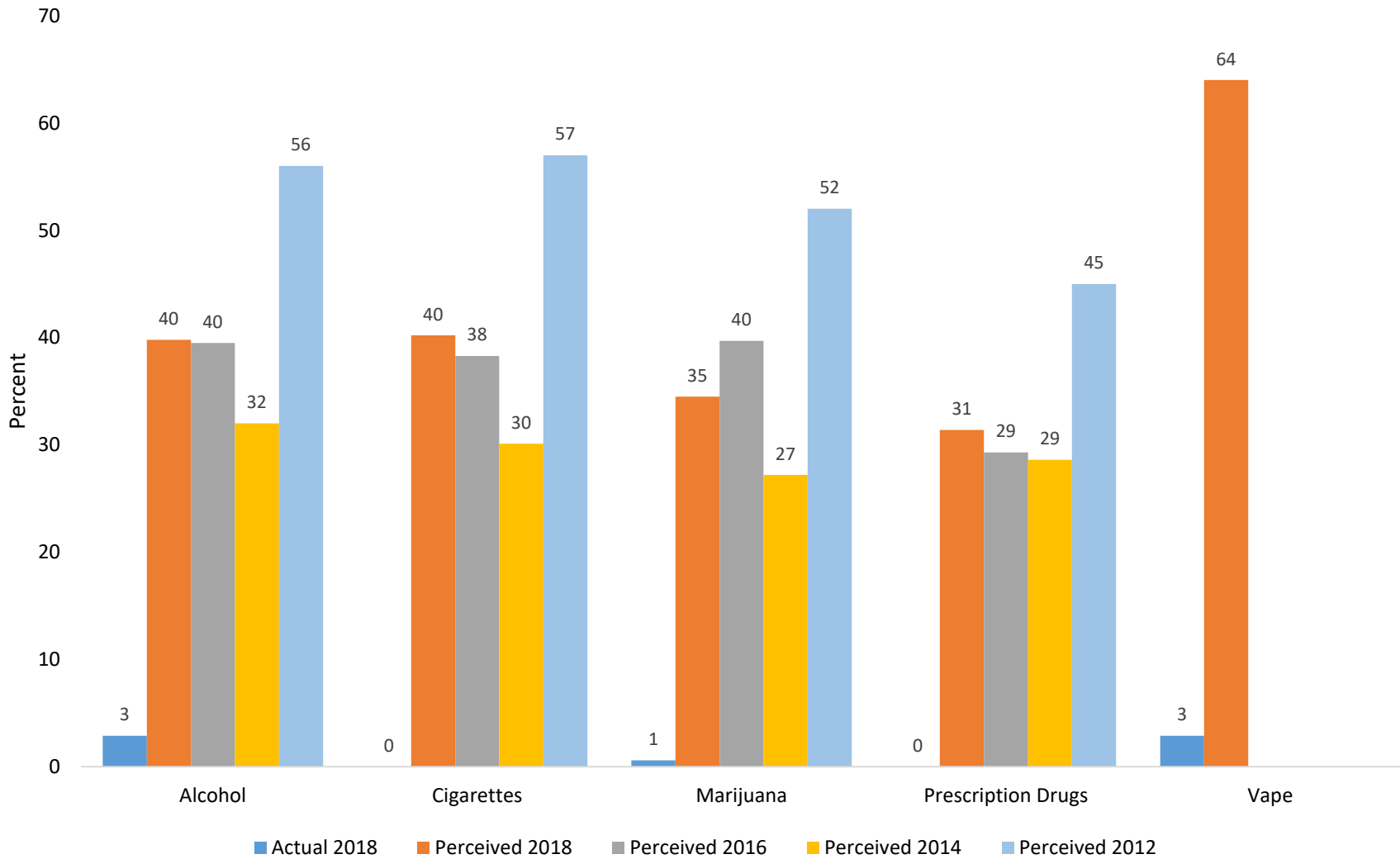
MASCO middle schoolers substantially over-estimate use of all substances studied ranging from 31 to 41 points for prescription drugs, marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes. There was no change from 2016 to 2018. The over-estimate for use of electronic vapor products was 61 points, far higher than any number we have seen in the past for this group.

In 2018, older youth (14 yrs), were more likely than younger youth (12 yrs) to over-estimate use of prescription drugs and of electronic vapor products. Girls were more likely than boys to over-estimate tobacco use.

**Chart 3: Risk of Harm and Parental and Peer Disapproval of Five Substances**



**Chart 4**  
**Actual 30 day use (2018) vs perceived use rate (2018, 2016, 2016, 2012)**  
**MASCO - Middle School**



## **Sexual Identity and Behavior**

Two questions about sexual identity were added to the 2018 questionnaire. Overall, about 8 in 10 youth responded that they were heterosexual; about 1 in 10, gay or lesbian or bisexual; and 1 in 10, don't know. These proportions appear to be in line with national results for high school youth (no YRBS data on this question is available for middle school youth). Boys were more likely than girls (83.5% vs 76.3%) and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders (82.9% vs 76.4%) to report being heterosexual.

Fully 98.2% of the youth said they were not transgender while .4% said they were transgender, gender non-conforming, .8% said they did not know, and .6% reported that they did not understand the question. The two youth who reported being transgender both indicated they are bi-sexual, and one replied "non-binary" to the gender question, while the other replied female.

About 1 in 50 youth indicated that they had been sexually active at some point in their lives (1.5%) with an age of onset of 12.9 years. More than 8 in 10 of those who responded they have been sexually active said they have had either 1 (66%) or 2 (17%) partners and 71% of those who have been sexually active indicated that they had used a condom the last time. There were no differences across time.



## Behaviors That Contribute to Unintentional Injuries

Youth were asked about three areas where their behavior could result in unintentional injuries.

Slightly fewer than 6 in 10 of the youth who rollerblade, bike, etc. choose not to wear a helmet on some occasions but only about 1 in 11 rarely or never wear that protective gear (8.9%). There were no differences across demographic groups but there was a significant decrease in the number of youth responding "rarely" or "never" compared with 2016 (8.9% vs 16.4%).

Relatively small numbers of middle school youth ride in cars driven by those who have used alcohol (4.9%) or marijuana (1.0%) prior to driving. There was no significant difference across time. Girls were more likely than boys (6.9% vs 2.9%) to have ridden with people who had been drinking.

## Behaviors That Contribute to Violence

About 1 in 7 youth reported that they had carried a weapon at some point in their lives (13.3%) which is significantly lower than in 2016 (13.3% vs 18.1%). Not surprisingly, boys were more likely than girls to report having carried a weapon (22.0% vs 4.5%).

The percentage of youth indicating that they had not gone to school at least 1 day in the last 30 because of feeling unsafe in traveling to school or at school was 2.8%.

Nearly 1/3 of the youth reported having been in a fight at some point in their lives (29.9%) with boys more likely than girls and 14 year olds more likely than 13 year olds to report that behavior (48.1% vs 12.2% and 33.2% vs 25.1%, respectively). About 1 in 50 were injured severely enough in a fight to require medical attention (2.9%). There were no differences across time on these two questions.

## Bullying

### **Youth as Victim of Bullying**

About 1 out of 5 middle schoolers reported having been bullied at school in the past couple of months (20.8%) with most reporting the frequency as once or twice (18.5%). There were no significant differences across gender, age, or grade. About 1 in 7 reported cyber-bullying (14.4%) with no differences across demographic groups. There were no significant differences across time for frequency of being bullied.

The most common forms of bullying reported were being called names/being made fun of (11.4%), having rumors spread about the victim (8.8%) and being excluded (8.0%).

### **Youth as Perpetrator of Bullying**

About 1 in 50 youth indicated that they had bullied another youth in the past couple of months (2.1%). The primary way that youth bullied was teasing (1.2%). About the same number report (3.1%) report cyber-bullying other youth. There were no differences across time.

### **Responses to Bullying**

When asked how they reacted when they were bullied youth said they preferred to walk away/ignore (19.7%), to respond with words or actions (11.3%), or to tell the bully to stop (11.1%).

The most common responses of youth when they see someone else being bullied are to try to help the youth being bullied (41.5%), to tell a teacher (12.8%), or to tell parents or other family member (11.3%).

About 1 in 3 youth reported that teachers attempted to intervene in bullying situations “almost always” (38.4%) – a significant increase from 2016 (25.9%). Twelve year olds were more likely than 14 year olds to report that teacher “almost always” intervene (45.2% vs 26.9%). Only about 1 in 10 youth said teachers almost never intervene (9.0%) with 8<sup>th</sup> graders more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to give this response.

### **Location of Bullying**

Youth reported that hallways (16.8%), social media (15.4%), and outside of school (12.2%) were the most common locations for bullying to occur.

## **Social Media/Electronic Media**

Three questions were added to the 2018 questionnaire. About 1 in 4 youth reported that people had posted things on social media that upset them (24.5%) with girls more likely than boys to report upsetting posts (29.6% vs 19%). About 1 in 12 reported receiving explicit material via electronic communication (8.0%) with no differences across demographic groups. Fewer than 1 in 50 (1.6%) said they had sent explicit material – again with no demographic differences.

## Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm

### Stress:

When asked how much of a problem stress was 29.4% replied “Not a problem at all/Almost never a problem” while 9.5% replied “Always a problem”. Girls were more likely than boys to respond “Often” or “Always” (34.4% vs 25.9%), while boys were more likely to respond “Not at all” (10.8% vs 3.6%) and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to respond “Always” (13.30% vs 5.7%). There was no difference across time.

The most frequently mentioned sources of stress were

- School work (80.2%)
- My expectations of myself (40.1%)
- Friendships (28.9%)
- Extra-curricular activities (28.7%)
- Parents’ expectations of me (27.9%)

Most youth employed some type of positive stress management technique with the most popular being

- Journal/draw/listen to music/spend time alone (39.4%)\*\*
- Talk to parent or family member (32.4%)\*\*
- Talk to friends (29.6%)\*\*
- Exercise/yoga (17.6%)

More than 1 in 7 said they had no way to manage stress (15.1%) and less than 1% used drugs or alcohol to manage stress. Responses marked with \*\* were chosen more frequently in 2018 than in 2016.

### Depression and Self-harm (including suicide):

When asked if they exhibited signs of clinical depression (feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row) 16.3% responded “Yes”. About 1 in 14 reported having hurt or injured themselves on purpose at least once (7.5%). There was no difference across time.

During the past twelve months, 5.9% said they seriously considered suicide and 2.5% said they made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. During the past 12 months 1.2% said they actually attempted.

## **Protective Factors**

### **Supportive Adults:**

About 2/3 of the youth reported having at least one teacher or other school adult they could talk with about important things (67.1%). Outside of school only 3.1% said they did not have an adult to turn to about things important to them, while more than half mentioned parent or other adult family member (55.7%) and more than 1/3 mentioned both family and non-family adults (36.9%). Girls were more likely to have both family and non-family adults to talk to (43.5% vs 31.1%). Mention of the both family and non-family category was higher in 2018 than in 2016 (36.9% vs 27.9%).

When asked if they had spoken with an adult family member about various topics, about 4 in 10 said they had not (39.2%), while 45.7% had discussed electronic vapor products (a significant increase from 2016 – 31.7%); 39.4%, alcohol; 33.5%, marijuana; 32.5%, tobacco; 26.0%, sexual activity. About 21% had talked about use of prescription drugs without a prescription.

### **Safety at School:**

Nearly ¾ of the youth agreed (54.1%) or strongly agreed (18.0%) that they felt safe at school and only 1.2% strongly disagreed. There were no differences across demographic groups.

### **Feeling Valued:**

Between 2/3 and 3/4 of the youth strongly agreed or agreed with each of these statements:

- I feel my teachers care about me and give me encouragement and support. (72.6%)
- I feel my peers at this school care about me as a person. (66.8%)
- I feel that adults in the Tri-Town community care about me as a young person. (69.3%)

Agreement with the last two questions was significantly higher in 2018 than in 2016. Twelve year olds were more likely than 14 year olds to strongly agree on the first question (25.7% vs 11.8%) and 7<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders to strongly agree on the third question (23.4% vs 13.3%).

### **Participation in extra-curriculars:**

About 80% of the youth reported being involved in an organized after-school activity (79.5%); and more than 4 in 10 said they spent at least 1 hour on volunteer work or community service (42.8%). Girls were more likely than boys to report being involved in after school activities (84.5% vs 73.8%).

## **Weight, Weight Management, Exercise, Nutrition and Sleep**

### **Weight and Weight Management:**

About 20% of the youth described themselves as very underweight (2.5%) or slightly underweight (18.6%) and similar proportions saw themselves as slightly overweight (16.6%) or very overweight (3.1%); the remaining 59.2% thought their weight was about right. Boys were more likely than girls to see themselves as very or slightly underweight (27.2% vs 15.2%). There was no significant change across time for youth in general.

While only about 20% see themselves as overweight, 31.8% report that they are trying to lose weight (significantly lower than 2016 – 36.7%). One in nine say they are trying to gain weight. Boys were more likely than girls to report trying to gain weight (17.6% vs 5.4%).

Only 4.8% of the youth mentioned unhealthy weight management methods (e.g. fasting, diet pills, vomiting, laxatives). Preferred methods of weight management were exercise (64.7%) and eating fewer calories (31.3%).

### **Physical Activity:**

Youth responses in this area in 2018 were very similar to responses in 2016. More than 9 in 10 youth reported engaging in 20 minutes of physical activity that made them sweat and breathe hard at least one day in the last seven (94.9%) with boys doing so more frequently than girls.

### **“Electronic” Activity:**

Only 1.4% said they did not use an electronic device for non-homework activities and 8.7% said they used one for less than an hour a day. In contrast 45.5% said they used a computer or smartphone 3 or more hours per day with males more likely than females to report heavy use. There were no differences between 2016 and 2018.

## **Nutrition:**

**Breakfast:** About ½ reported eating breakfast every day (49.1%) and 6.1% reported never eating breakfast with boys more likely than girls to report they eat breakfast six or seven days (64.2% vs 59.2%)

**Caffeine:** More than 4 times as many youth reported not having a caffeinated beverage in the past 7 days (34.7%) as reported having caffeine at least once a day (7.8%).

**Energy Drinks:** About 1 in 7 indicated they had an energy drink in the past 30 days. There were no differences across demographic groups or time.

## **Sleep:**

Median number of hours of sleep for the respondents was 8.17 with 56.7% reporting averaging 8 hours or more each night. Eighth graders tended to report somewhat less sleep than 7<sup>th</sup> graders.