

Executive Summary – Middle School

Survey

The 2014 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 student 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 24, 2014. Of the 620 middle school youth present on November 24, 2014, 573 surveys, or 92.4% were included in the final analysis. Of the 657 enrolled, accounting for youth absences, tardiness, opt outs and discarded surveys, total participation rate was 87%.

Reporting

- Note that percentages for **all youth** taking the survey tie to general frequencies. Percentages for **gender, age, and grade groups** tie back to the tables contained in the evaluator’s executive summary.

Overall

- There were a very large number of differences across time (2014 vs 2012) – mostly in a “positive” direction. Understanding the reasons for those changes would be very valuable. They could be the result of programs designed to increase youth’ awareness of potentially dangerous behaviors. Or they could be the result of a somewhat younger sample in 2014 or major differences across two “cohorts” – current 9th and 10th graders who were in middle school in 2012 and current 7th and 8th graders.

Substance Use

- Relatively small numbers of youth reported either lifetime or current use of the substances examined with lifetime use percentages ranging from 1.1% to 4.7% and current use percentages, from .4% to 4.6%
- Electronic nicotine devices appear to have more appeal to youth than other substances.
- There were few differences across gender, age, or grade.
- The vast majority of youth thought that substance use posed moderate or great risk of harm (over 80% for all substances) and youth thought that both parents and peers would feel substance use was wrong or very wrong (above 90%). There were few differences across gender, age, or grade.
- Most youth over-estimated their peers use of substances when compared with actual use but the levels have fallen significantly since 2012. That is, in 2014 fewer youth thought their peers were current substance users than in 2012.

Sexual Behavior

- About 1 in 50 youth reported being sexually active – most with multiple partners. Only 50% of those who are sexually active used a condom the last time they were active.

Behaviors that Contribute to Unintentional Injuries

- Few youth ride with drivers who have been drinking (4.5%) or smoking marijuana (1.7%).

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 fight related questions – but a decrease since 2012 in the percentage having carried a weapon.

Bullying

- About 20% of the youth reported having been bullied and about 5% reported having bullied others.
- Most bullying was verbal rather than physical.
- More youth reported frequent intervention in episodes of bullying than in 2012.

Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm

- About 6% reported stress was a problem always.
- Girls were more likely than boys to report stress as a problem often or always.
- School work and self- and parental expectations were the most common sources of stress.
- Most youth used positive stress management techniques.
- About 1 in 12 reported being clinically depressed at some point.
- Self-harm and suicide responses all saw decreases from 2012 to 2014.

Protective Factors

- Most youth had an adult to confide in and most appeared to feel valued based on their responses to several questions.
- 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%).
- 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 a day.
- Nearly all youth reported using electronic media for things other than school work every day.
- Most youth reported relatively healthy eating habits.

Substance Use

Comparison to 2012, 2010 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 2014, 2012, and 2010 and Massachusetts in 2013. There is no data for lifetime use of cigarettes for MASCO in 2014 because the question was not consistent with past surveys.

Between 2012 and 2014 there was a significant decrease reported in lifetime use of alcohol and marijuana. Similarly, there was a decrease in current use (past 30 days) of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana and in the percentage engaging in high risk drinking between 2012 and 2014.

Tobacco/Nicotine

Fewer than 1 in 100 reported ever having smoked a whole cigarette (.9%) and only 0.5% smoked in the past 30 days. Close to 1 in 20 reported using electronic smoking devices in the past 30 days with 14 year olds more likely to have tried these devices than 12 year olds (9% vs 2.5%) and 8th graders more likely than 7th graders (6.7% vs 2.1%). The most common way to obtain tobacco products was to borrow (25% of those who use tobacco).

Alcohol

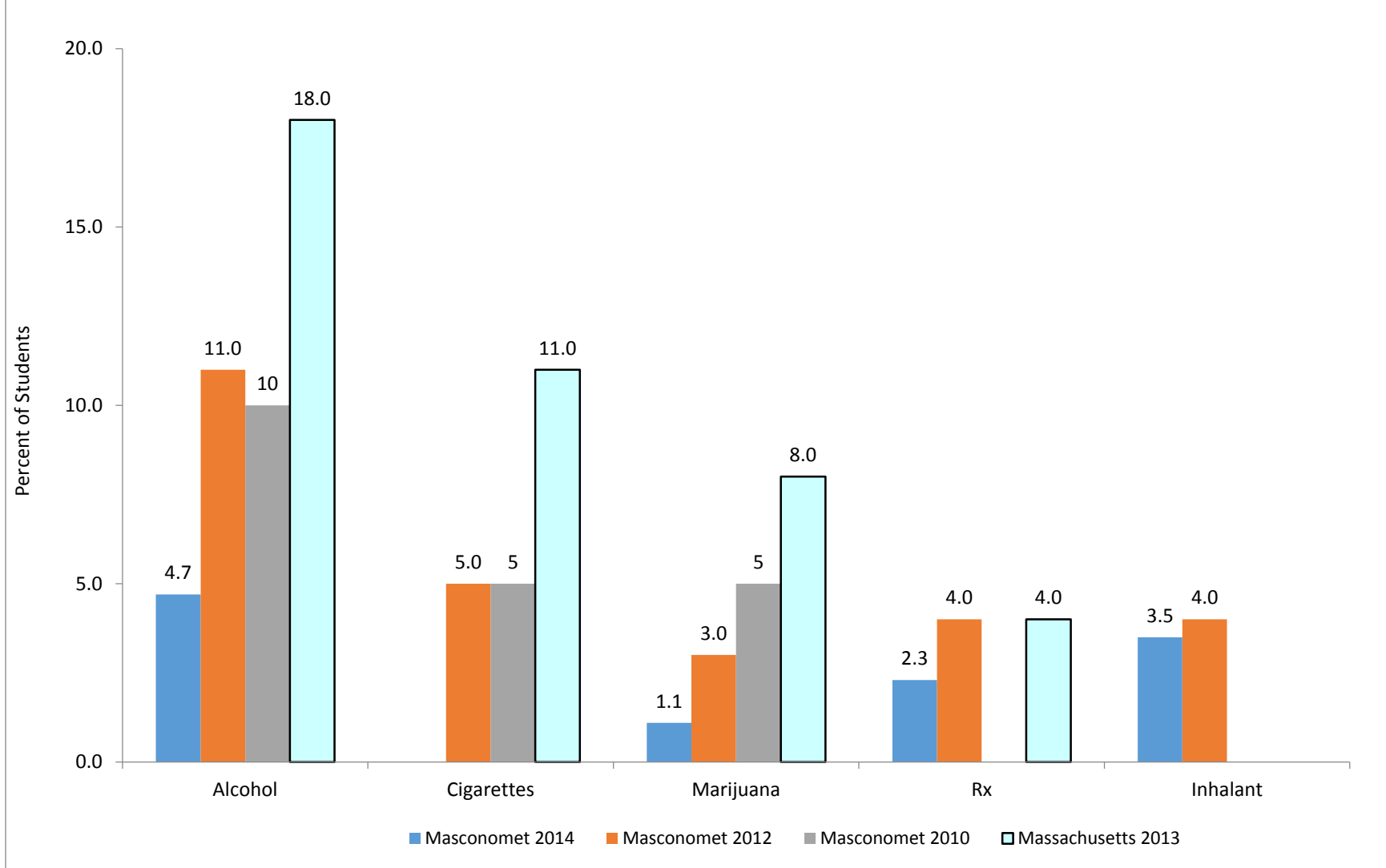
Slightly fewer than 1 in 20 youth reported lifetime use of alcohol with 11.8 years as the age of onset – slightly higher than 2012. About 1% reported current use of alcohol (1.1%) and about half of those reported at least one incident of high risk drinking in the past 30 days (.7%) About ¼ reported that alcohol would be fairly or very easy to obtain (24.9%)– a significant decline from 2012 (41%). Boys were more like than girls to report perceived ease of access (32.5% vs 20.9%). About 60% of those who drank reported obtaining alcohol at home – and about the same proportion reported drinking at family events.

Other substances

In terms of lifetime use, inhalants were the most popular other substance with 3.5% reporting have used inhalants at least once, followed by prescription drugs without a prescription (2.3%), marijuana (1.1%), over the counter medications (.7%) and synthetic pot (.2%). There were a very limited number of current users of either marijuana (.7%) or prescription drugs without a prescription (.4%).

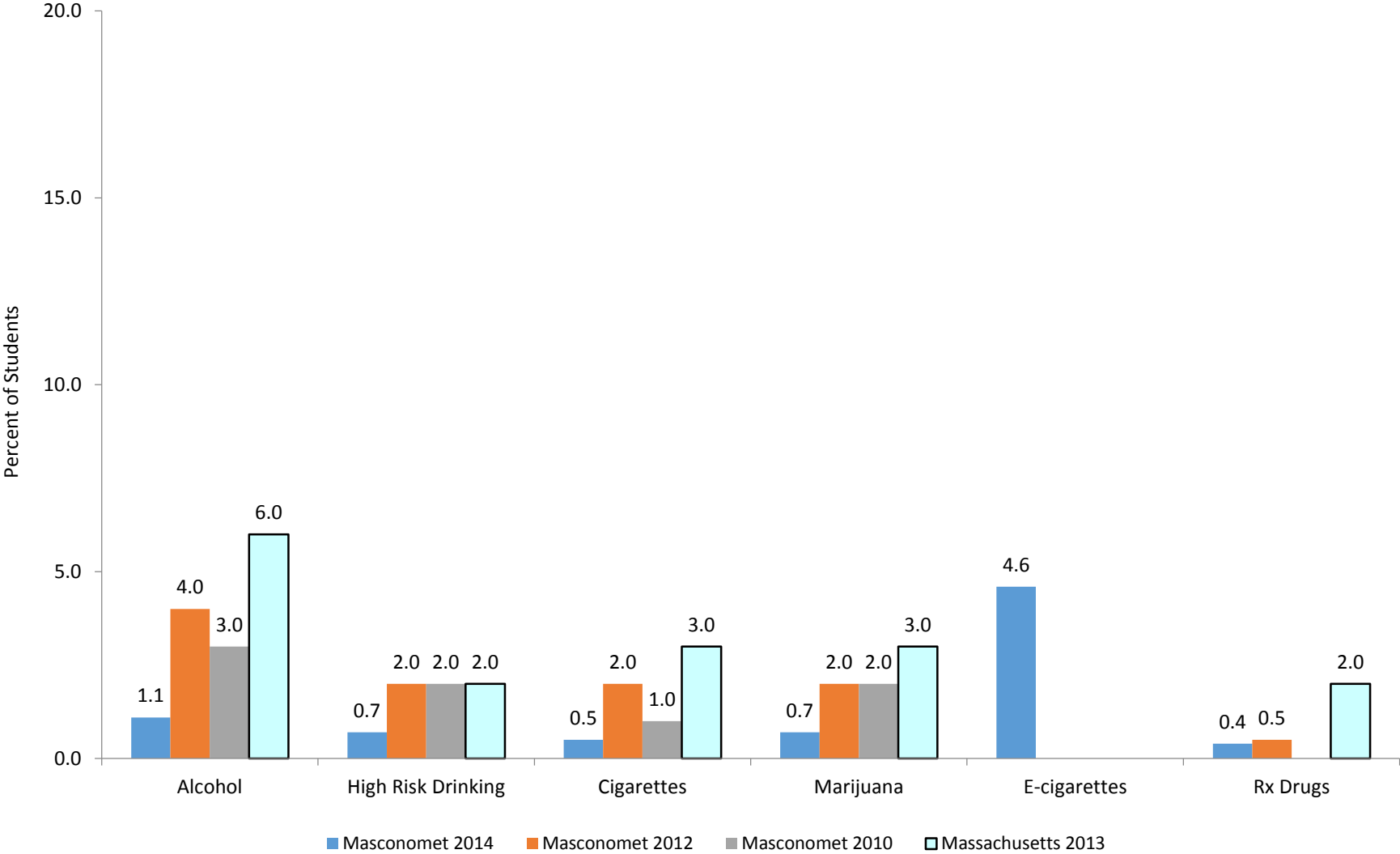
**Chart 1: MASCO Middle School Lifetime Substance Use 2014
Compared to MASCO 2012, MASCO 2010 and Massachusetts 2013***

**where available*



**Chart 2: MASCO Middle School Past 30 Days Substance Use 2014
Compared to MASCO 2012, MASCO 2010 and Massachusetts 2013***

**where available*



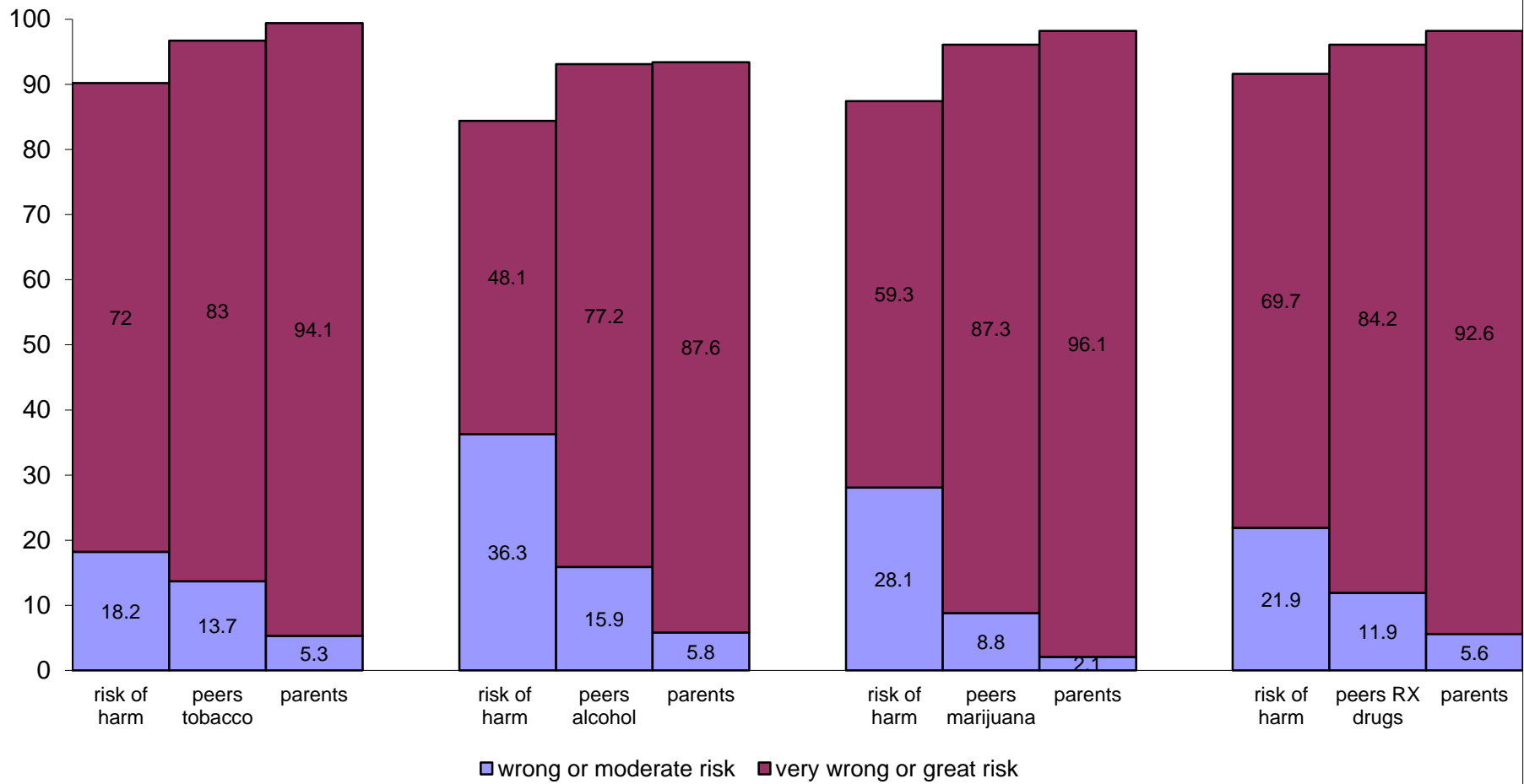
Perception of Risk of Harm, Parental and Peer Disapproval

Chart 3 shows that in 2014 the vast majority of middle school youth perceived that substance use entailed great or moderate risk of harm with all four substances above 80% and cigarettes and misuse of prescription drugs over 90%. Perceptions of moderate or great risk for use of alcohol and marijuana were significantly higher in 2014 than in 2012 (84.4% vs 73.5% and 87.4% and 80%, respectively.)

Chart 3 also reveals that nearly all youth think their parents and peers think use of the substances is wrong or very wrong (over 90% for all substances). Interestingly, the percent of youth who said they felt their parents would think alcohol use was wrong or very wrong declined significantly from 2012 to 2014 (97% to 93.4%) while the percent who thought their peers would say misuse of prescription drugs was wrong or somewhat wrong increased significantly during that same time (90% vs 96.1%).

While there were few significant differences across age groups (that appears to begin in high school), there were differences across gender with girls more likely than boys to see greater degrees of risk and to feel stronger levels of parental and peer disapproval for most substances.

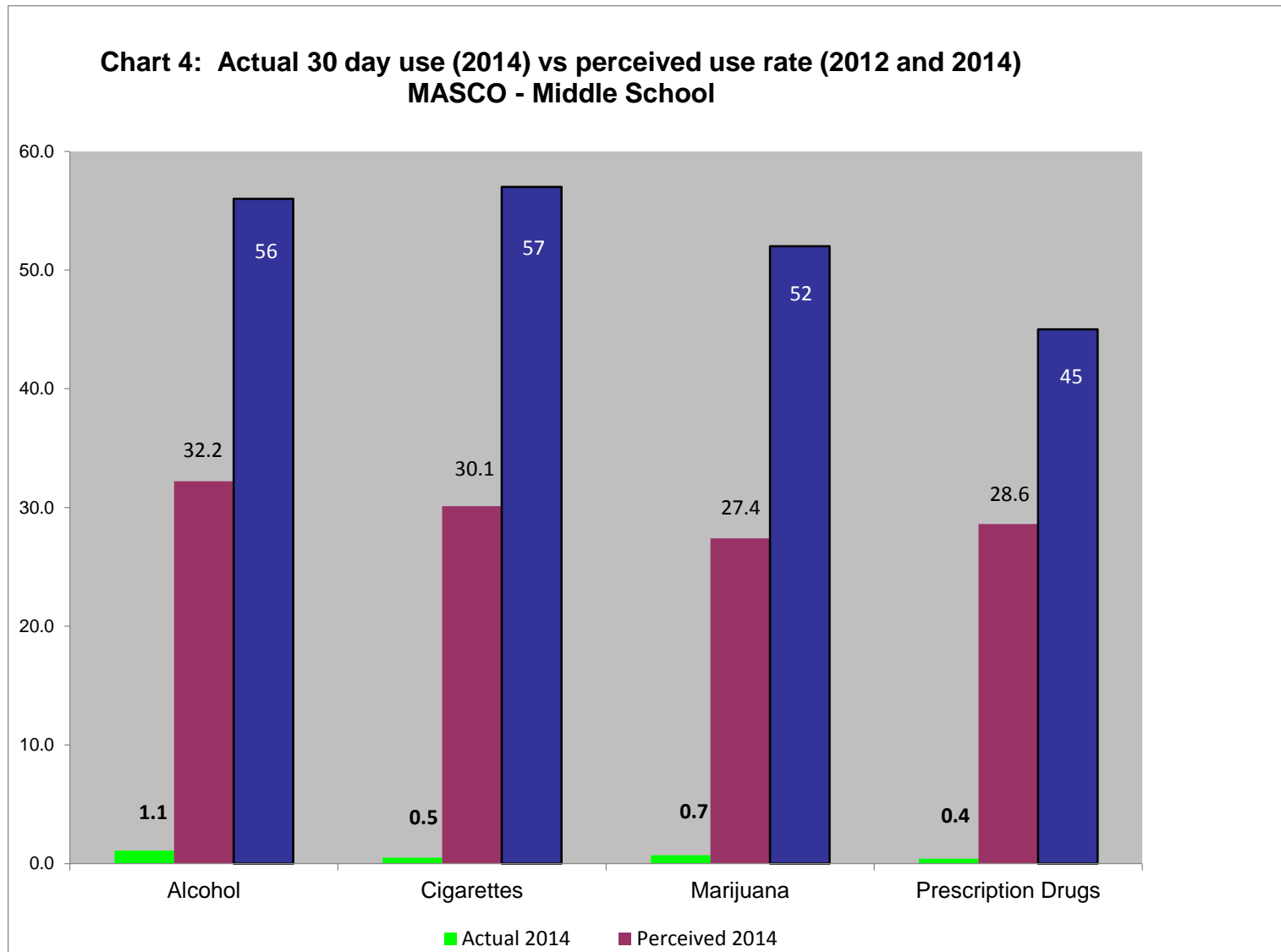
Chart 3: Risk of Harm and Parental and Peer Disapproval of Four Substances



Social Norming

MASCO middle schoolers substantially over-estimate use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs – by 28 to 31 points – not enough to be classified as “misperception” – but still substantial. The most interesting finding here is that estimated use went down very significantly from 2012 to 2014 for all four substances – drops of between 16 and 26 points. It would be interesting to explore reasons for these changes.

There were few gender or age differences on these questions – in contrast to the findings in the high school survey.



NOTE: The perception information represents the percentage of survey respondents who perceive the average “Masconomet Middle School student” used alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana or prescription drugs without a prescription one time/day or more in the past 30 days.

Sexual Behavior

About 1 in 50 youth indicated that they had been sexually active at some point in their lives with an age of onset of 12.8 years. About 2/3 of those who responded they have been sexually active said they have had either 1 (21.7%) or 2 (39.3%) partners and about 50% of those who have been sexually active indicated that they had used a condom the last time – a smaller proportion than reported by high school youth this year.

The questions in this section dealt with the concept of being “sexually active”, defined in the survey as “being physically involved in sexual activity with another person” whereas in 2012 and in the 2013 Massachusetts survey, the questions specified sexual intercourse – thus results cannot be compared over time or with state data.

Behaviors That Contribute to Unintentional Injuries

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

About 2/3 of the youth who rollerblade, bike, etc. choose not to wear a helmet on some occasions but only slightly more than 1 in 10 rarely or never wear that protective gear. The percentage of those who roll/ride/etc and who do not always wear a helmet decreased in the past two years from 69.2% to 61.3%. Eighth graders were more likely than 7th graders to report never wearing a helmet (12.8% vs 7.4%).

Relatively small numbers of middle school youth ride in cars driven by those who have used alcohol (4.5%) or marijuana (1.7%) prior to driving. The proportion riding with persons who had drunk alcohol prior to driving was significantly lower in 2014 than in 2012 (4.5% vs 15%). Again, eighth graders were more likely than seventh graders to say they had ridden with someone who had been drinking (6.2% vs 2.5%).

The proportion of youth who ride with “questionable” drivers increases in high school, due at least in part to increased opportunity.

Behaviors That Contribute to Violence

About 1 in 7 youth reported that they had carried a weapon at some point in their lives (15.5%) – down from 22% in 2012. Not surprisingly, boys were more likely than girls to report having carried a weapon (25.1% vs 4.4%).

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 3.3% -- significantly down from 2012 (6%).

Nearly 1/3 of the youth reported having been in a fight at some point in their lives (31.9%) with boys more likely than girls to report that behavior (48.5% vs 21.6%). About 1 in 50 were injured severely enough in a fight to require medical attention (2.6%). There were no differences across time on these two questions.

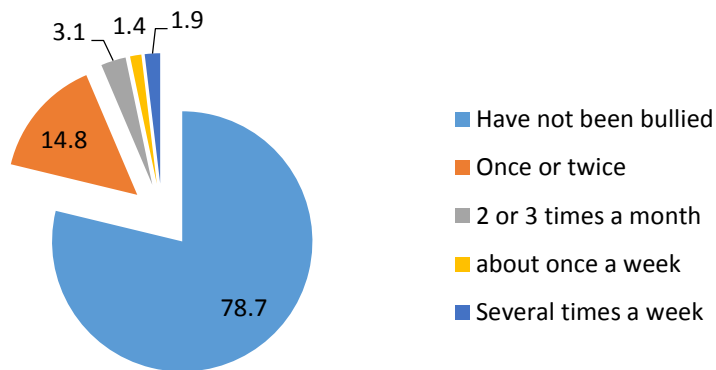
Bullying

Youth as Victim of Bullying

About 2 out of 10 middle schoolers reported having been bullied at school in the past couple of months (21.3%) with most reporting the frequency as once or twice (14.8%). Boys were more likely than girls to report having been bullied several times a week (2.7% vs .4%). Slightly more than 10% reported cyber-bullying (11.5%) with girls more likely than boys to report the frequency as once or twice in the past few months (11.8% vs 6.0%).

The most common forms of bullying reported were being called names/being made fun of (14.0%), being excluded or ignored (9.3%), and having rumors spread (6.7%).

How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months? (MS)



(7.78% vs 20%).

Nearly half the youth reported that teachers attempted to intervene in bullying situations “almost always” (42%) – a significant increase from 2012 (30%). Only about 1 in 10 youth said teachers almost never intervene (8.6%).

Youth as Perpetrator of Bullying

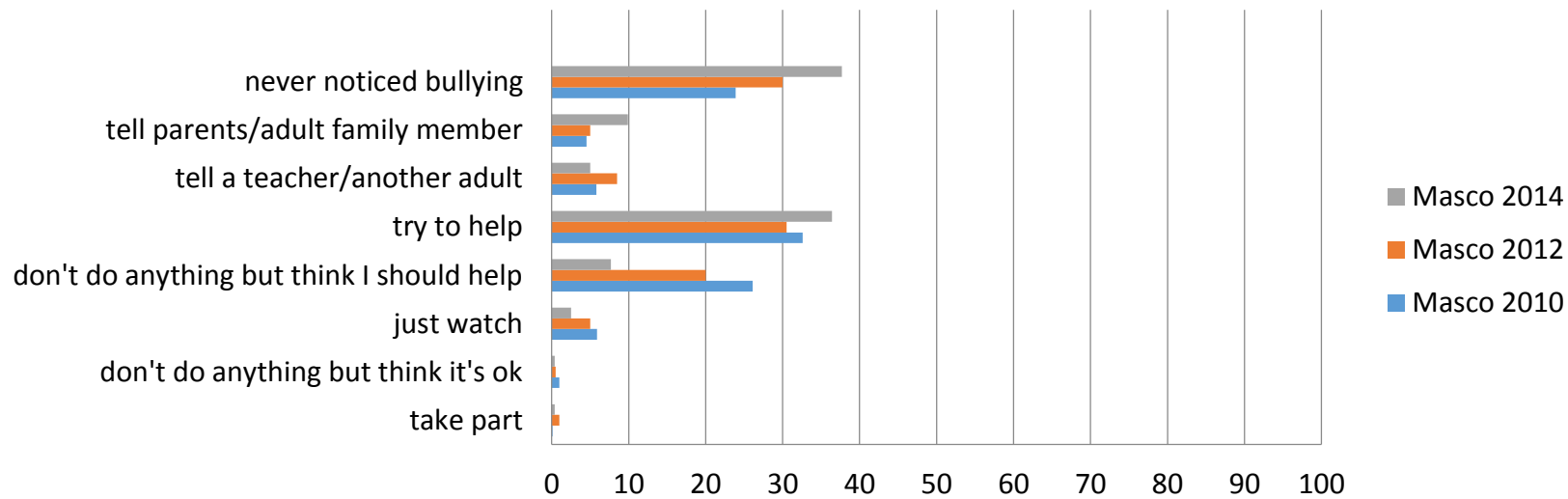
About 1 in 20 youth indicated that they had bullied another youth in the past couple of months (4.6%). The ways that youth bullied correspond with the reported types of bullying – being made fun of (4.0%), exclude or ignore (1.9%), spreading false rumors (.7%). About the same number report (5.1%) report cyber-bullying other youth.

Responses to Bullying

When asked how they reacted when they were bullied youth said they preferred to walk away/ignore (19.8%), to tell an adult at school (10.7%) and to tell parents or other adult family member (10.1)

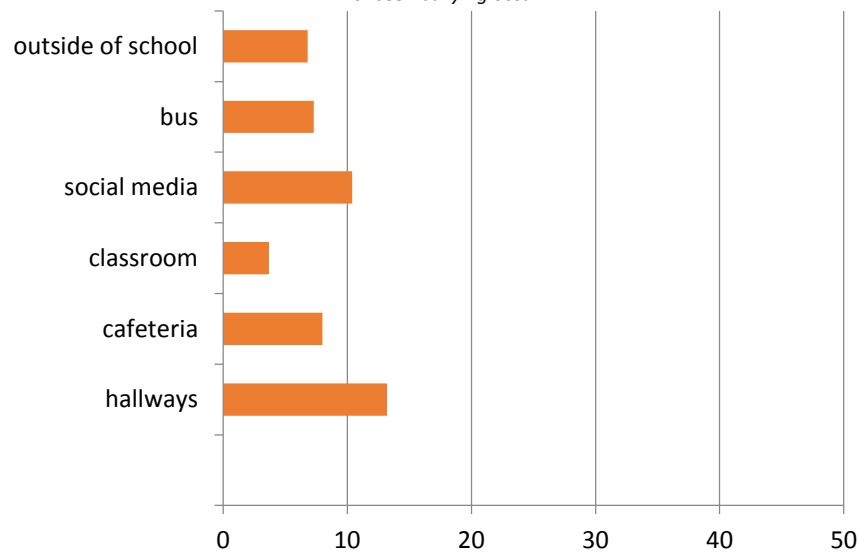
The most common responses of youth when they see someone else being bullied are to try to help the youth being bullied (36.4%) and to tell an adult (at school or home) (14.5%). More youth reported trying to help in 2014 than in 2012 (36.4% vs 30%) and fewer reported watching but feeling they should help

How MS youth react if see/learn that a peer is being bullied



Where Bullying Happens (MS)

NOTE: When asked where bullying occurs, 45% of MS students reported having **not** experienced or seen bullying occur



Location of Bullying

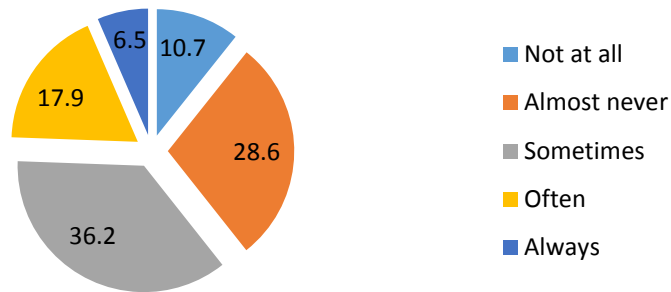
Youth reported that hallways (17.8%), social media (14.1%), and the cafeteria (10.8%) were the most common locations for bullying to occur.

Stress, Depression, and Self-Harm

Stress:

When asked how much of a problem stress was 39.3% replied “Not a problem at all/Almost never a problem” while 6.5% replied “Always a problem”. Girls were more likely than boys to respond “Often” or “Always” (33.8% vs 15.8%), while boys were more likely to respond “Not at all” or “Almost Never” (49.8% vs 27.9%).

How much of a problem is stress in your life? (MS)

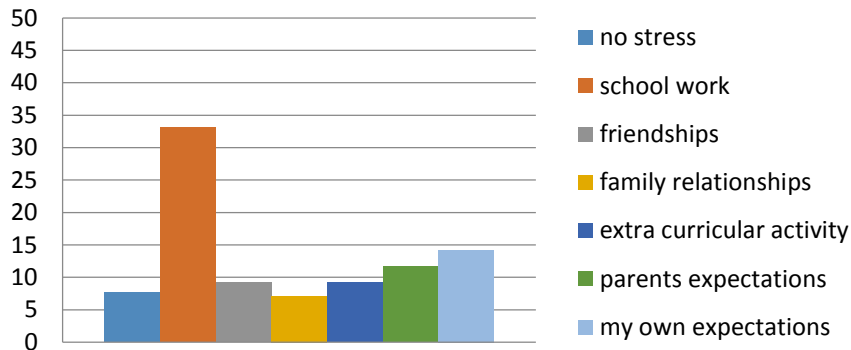


The most frequently mentioned sources of stress were:

- School work (67.5%)
- My expectations of myself (28.9%)
- Parents’ expectations of me (23.9%)
-

The remaining responses (friendships, family, extra-curricular) all were chosen by 15% to 20% of the youth.

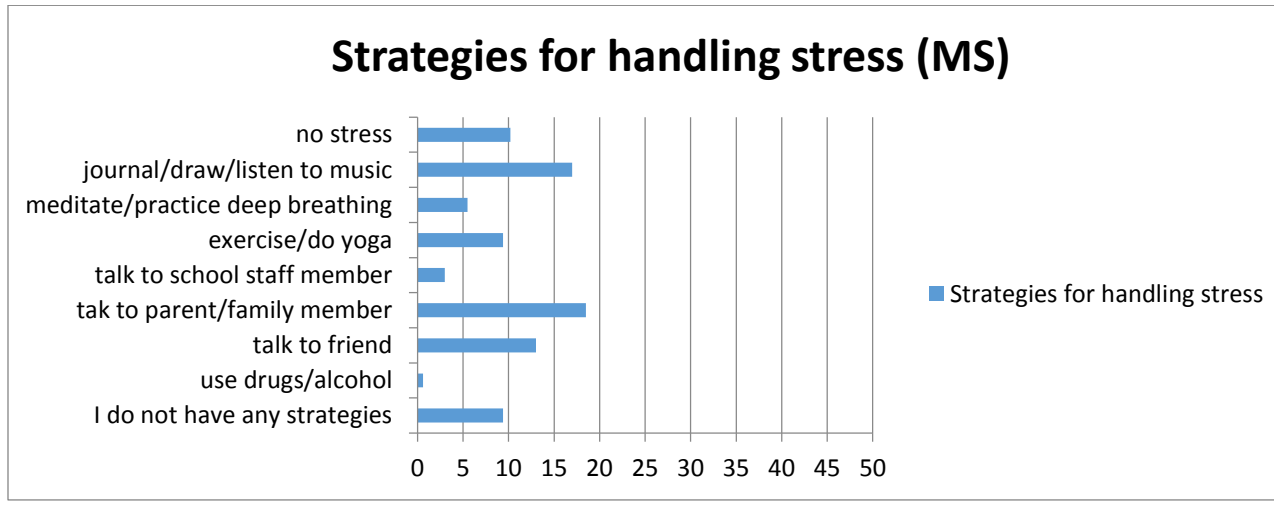
Sources of Stress in past 30 days (MS)



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

- Talk to parent or family member (26.2%)
- Journal/draw/listen to music/spend time alone (24.1%)
- Talk to friends (18.5%)
- Exercise/yoga (13.4%)

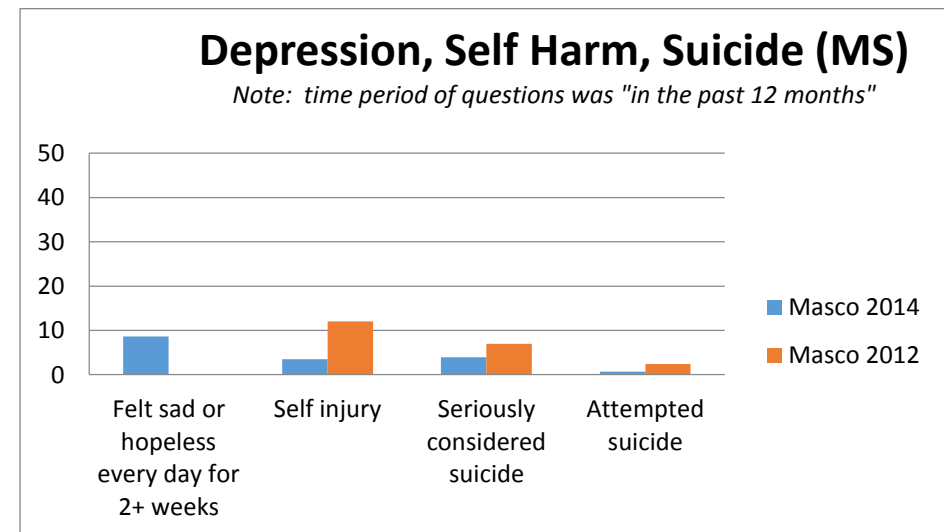
More than 1 in 10 each said they had no way to manage stress (13.4%) and less than 1% used drugs or alcohol to manage stress.



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) 8.6% responded “Yes”. Less than 5% reported having hurt or injured themselves on purpose at least once (3.5%) – which is significantly lower than in 2012 (12%).

During the past twelve months, 3.9% said they seriously considered suicide and 1.9% said they made a plan about how they would attempt suicide (both percentages down from 2012 (7% and 6%, respectively) . During the past 12 months .7% said they actually attempted suicide – again down from 2012 (2%).



Protective Factors

Protective factors are associated with the prevention of risky behaviors and substance use. Perception of risk of harm from substance use and parental and peer disapproval of substance use were discussed earlier and were shown to relate to substance use. In this section we address presence of supportive adults, feeling valued, and participation in sports and extra-curricular activities.

Supportive Adults:

SUPPORTIVE ADULTS			
		Masco 2014	Masco 2012
Is there at least one adult/teacher at school that you can talk to if you have a problem?	<i>Yes</i>	75.6%	68%
	<i>No</i>	8.5%	9.5%
	<i>Not sure</i>	15.9%	23%
Outside of school are there adults you can talk to about things that are important to you?	<i>Yes – Parent/adult family member</i>	61.7%	57%
	<i>Yes – non family adult</i>	1.4%	3%
	<i>Yes – both family and non-family adults</i>	33.2%	32%
	<i>No</i>	1.7%	2%
	<i>Not sure</i>	1.9%	5%

Fully ¾ of the youth reported having at least one teacher or other school adult they could talk with about important things (75.6%) – an increase from 68% in 2012. Boys were more likely than girls to say they did not have such an adult (11.0% vs 5.9%). Outside of school only 1.7% said they did not have an adult to turn to about things important to them, while nearly 2/3 mentioned parent or other adult family member (61.7%) and close to 1/3 mentioned both family and non-family adults (33.2%). Boys were more likely to mention only family members (66.8% vs 56.1%), while girls were more likely to have both family and non-family adults to talk to (39.1% vs 28.2%). These percentages for outside of school support were not different from those found in 2012.

When asked if they had spoken with an adult family member about various topics, over ½ said they had not, while 34.1% had discussed alcohol; 29.4%, tobacco; 27.4% marijuana; and 25.6% sexual activity. Fewer than 15% had talked about use of prescription drugs without a prescription.

Participation in sports and extra-curriculars:

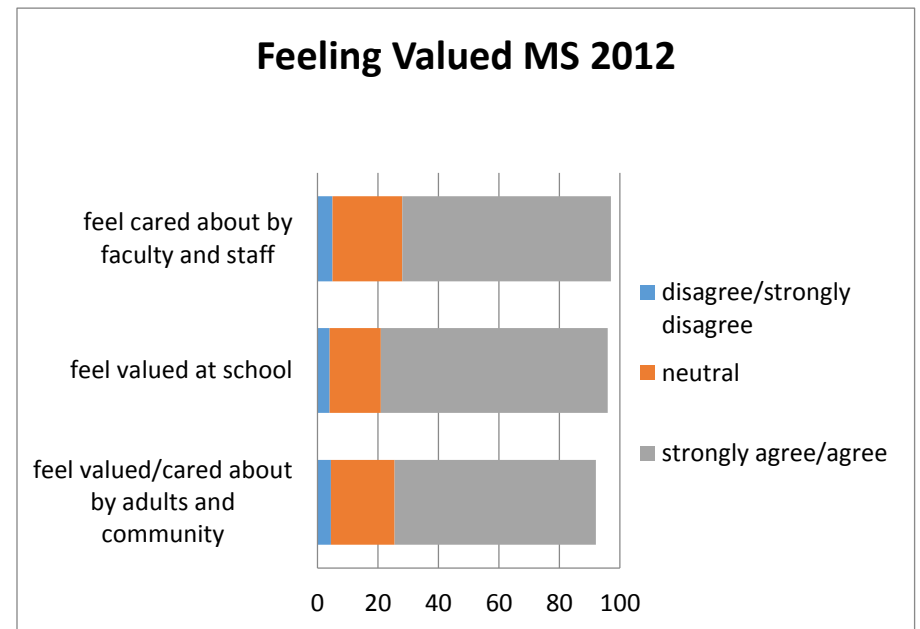
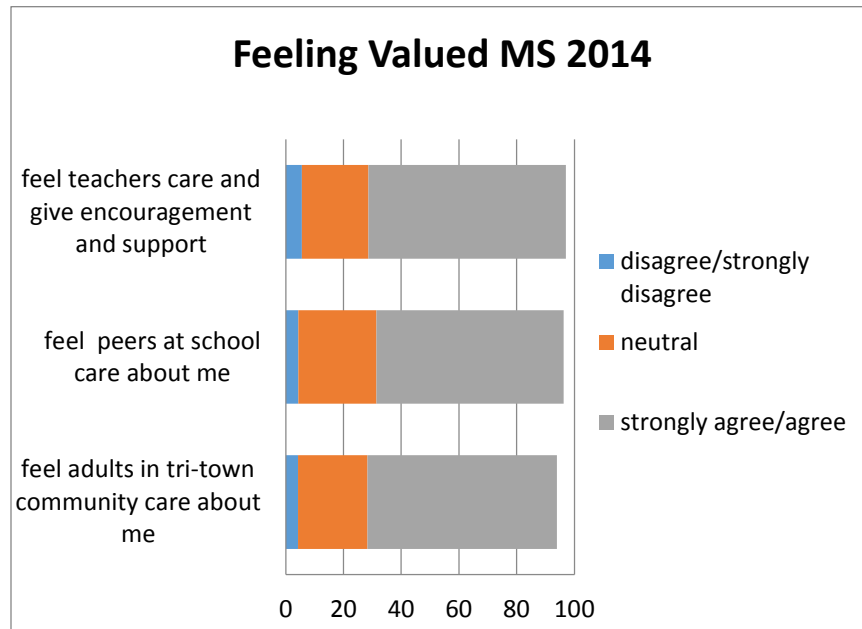
More than ¾ of the youth reported participating in at least one sports team (79.34%); more than 2/3 said they were involved in an organized after-school activity (70.1%) in the past week; and about 1/2 said they spent at least 1 hour on volunteer work or community service (48.3%) in an average month. Girls were more likely than boys to report being involved in after school activities (75.8% vs 65.2%). There were no differences across time on these questions.

Feeling Valued: *NOTE: Questions were revised for 2014 so a direct comparison is not possible.*

About 2/3 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. (68.5%)
- I feel my peers at this school care about me as a person. (64.9%)
- I feel that adults in the Tri-Town community care about me as a young person. (65.6%)

There were no changes across time.



Weight, Weight Management, Exercise and Nutrition

Weight and Weight Management:

About 20% of the youth described themselves as very underweight (2.7%) or slightly underweight (18.3%) and similar proportions saw themselves as slightly overweight (17.2%) or very overweight (2.3%); the remaining 59.5% thought their weight was about right. The proportion seeing themselves as underweight increased from 2012 (16%) and the proportion seeing their weight as about right decreased from 2012 (63%).

While only about 20% see themselves as overweight, 31.4% report that they are trying to lose weight. Slightly more than 1 in 10 say they are trying to gain weight (11.7%).

Only 3.6% of the youth mentioned unhealthy weight management methods (e.g. fasting, diet pills, vomiting, laxatives) – down from 10% in 2012. Preferred methods of weight management were exercise (63.8%) and eating fewer calories (28.4%).

Physical Activity:

Youth responses in this area in 2014 were very similar to responses in 2012. 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 (93.7%) with boys doing so more frequently than girls.

“Electronic” Activity:

Only 2.3% said they did not use an electronic device for non-homework activities and 14.4% said they used one for less than an hour a day. In contrast 37.1% said they used a computer or smartphone 3 or more hours per day.

Nutrition:

Most youth reported consuming health foods at least some time in the past seven days.

	Not in past 7 days	1 to 3 times in past 7 days	4 to 6 times in past 7 days	At least once a day
Fruit or 100% fruit juices	7.5%	26.2%	20.8%	45.6%
Vegetables/salads	2.0%	19.7%	21.9%	56.3%
# of glasses of milk	10.4%	17.4%	16.3%	55.9%

Breakfast: More than ½ reported eating breakfast every day (58.8%) and 5.8% reported never eating breakfast.

Caffeine: About 3 times as many youth reported not having a caffeinated beverage in the past 7 days (29.9%) as reported having caffeine at least once a day (10%).

Energy Drinks: Slightly more than 1 in 10 indicated they had an energy drink in the past 30 days (11.3% - with boys more likely than girls to say they did so (15.5% vs 6.8%).